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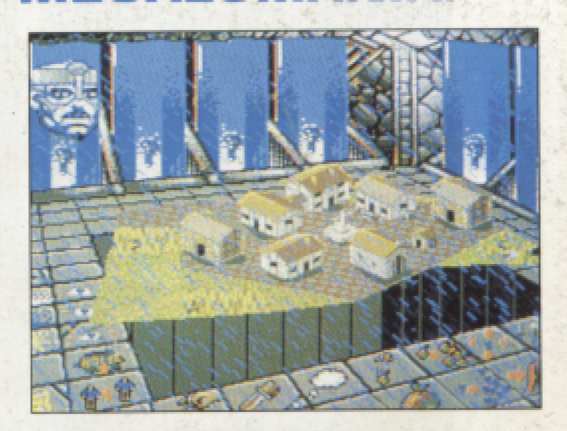
JULY 1990
ISSUE 22







MEGALOMANIA!



POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER...



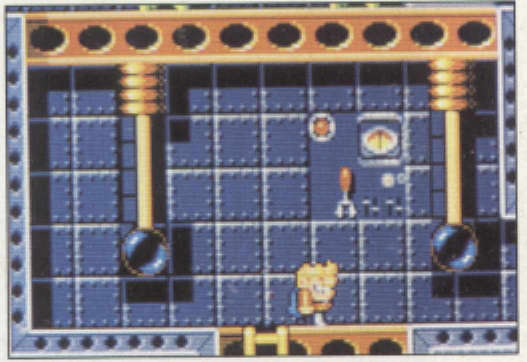
WONDERLAND
Magnetic Scrolls

DRIVING FORES!



PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts

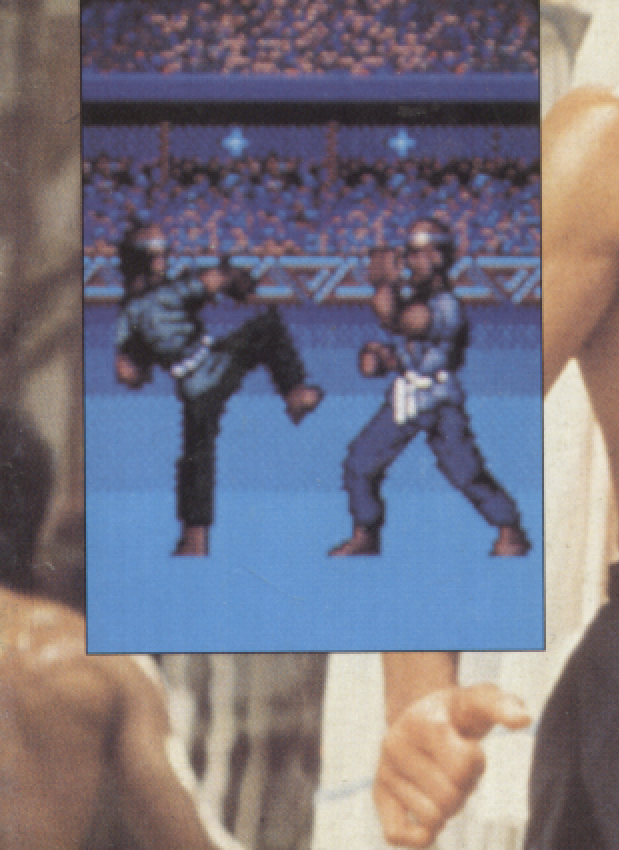
ALL THIS AND...



RICK DANGEROUS II
Firebird

FIGHTING TALK!

OUR DEFINITIVE MARTIAL ARTS FEATURE PULLS NO PUNCHES!



FREE INSIDE!
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF 16-BIT GAMES: PART TWO

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR



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4 UP FRONT

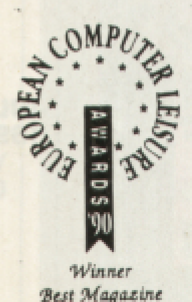
HERE WE are again with another in the new–look series. The response so far to the previous issue has been mixed but never anything other than extreme (see Letters). This is also true of the software this month, with plenty of class acts to impress, including some ace arcade–style antics, a squadron of far–out flight simulations, and of course the sequel to **Kick Off**. That's what's in. But what of the stuff that's not? The Arcades, Grafix, BackSpace and Showcase sections are probably noticeable by their absence, but rest assured normal service will be resumed as soon as possible. So until then... Keep 'em peeled.

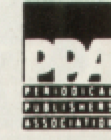
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6 LETTERS

DID YOU know that the Upper Voltan Airforce has no 'planes? Or that Robert Louis Stephenson died while helping his wife cook the dinner? Or that Idi Amin ate his Foreign Minister's liver? You do now. And there's plenty more invaluable information where that came from...



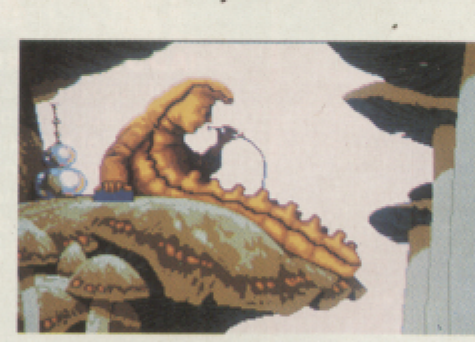
8 NEWS



THERE'S a flood of sequels as **RoboCop 2**, **Predator 2**, **Die Hard 2** and **Back To The Future III** warm up for release on both the big and small screen. Plus details on Hewson's **Nebulus 2** and Thalamus' **Restrictor**, a bundle of big things from Ocean and plenty of juicy gossip.

22 WORK IN PROGRESS

PICTURE a man going on a voyage beyond sight and sound... Bullfrog's **Powermonger** looks set to shock the world by creating millions of its own, while Creative Materials goes vertical, Rick Dangerous makes his long–awaited return and Magnetic Scrolls plays around with Alice with the revolutionary **Wonderland**.



ADVERTISERS INDEX

WHO'S advertising what and where.

30 REVIEWS

ANCO'S sequel to **Kick Off** is the best thing ever (and that's official). Bullfrog's **Flood** also surfaces, along with the best Golf game to date, four (count 'em) top–notch flight simulations and a host of supporting features.





78 DEMOS

HEADS explode, people get cut in half, legs are severed and Duran Duran has its latest single sampled. Can Phil South handle it?



81 FEATURE

GORDON Houghton slips into his pyjamas to brave the mysteries of the Orient and provide the definitive lowdown on the Martial Arts and the software it's spawned. We do hope his life insurance is up to date.





YOU MAY be used to reading reams of opinionated waffle elsewhere, but here we prefer to let the games speak for themselves. Relevant scenes are shown, with informative captions used to help convey the 'feel' of the game. Provided with each review are opinions highlighting any good and bad points, plus prices, release dates and ratings where possible. Basically there's something for everyone – at best a highly detailed review and at worst a highly detailed preview. There's nothing clever, just straightforward facts and ratings. Updates follow where appropriate.

Projectyle

GRAPHICS
Not necessarily how colourful or well drawn they are, but how well they are used.

SOUND
Again, not a reflection of quantity or indeed quality of sound, but how well it's used.

PLAYABILITY
How does the game feel? Is it addictive or just plain uninteresting.

VALUE
Essentially a reflection of lasting interest – how much game you get for your money.

OVERALL
A useful point of reference – a summary of the preceding ratings.



CRICKET QUERY

Dear The One
I was wondering if there are any decent cricket games for the Atari ST as I cannot find any advertised. Also, I played on the arcades at Scarborough and found a rather neat football game called **World Cup 90**. Is this going to be converted to the Atari?
Paul Joseph, East Lothian, Scotland

As far as we know, Cricket games are a bit hard to come by on the ST – or any 16-bit format for that matter. There's certainly nothing available or due to come from any of the larger publishers, but you may strike lucky and find something from a smaller home-grown firm if you keep your eyes peeled. As for World Cup 90, the answer there is once again a big EN OH. The licence has yet to be acquired, and with the World Cup in its final stages, it's unlikely that anyone will take an interest.

WANTED: UMS II

Dear The One
What has happened to **UMS II**? A single advertisement in your magazine at the end of last year and that is all. No review, no nothing except software mail-order companies saying they can sell you a copy. Is it released, and if it isn't, when is it likely to be? If it has been released, why no review? Even a negative view would be worth something.
Andrew Martin, Melbourne, Australia

It's the same old story – an early advertising campaign coupled with a number of delays in the game's production and the result is a fair amount of confusion. But rest assured, UMS II is now nearing completion (see News) and should definitely hit the streets in the next two months.

AMIGA AMIGO?

Dear The One
In response to Mr Thinks-He's-A-Complete-Dude-Ace-Wiseguy-Smartarse-Name-And-Address-Not-Supplied in your June issue, I would just like to say that I would enjoy kicking him repeatedly in the head until it turned into a mushy pulp, as he is a completely irritating poser who thinks he's extremely hard telling you to "Cut the crap! Are you afraid Amigas are better or something?" What kind of a severely immature and irrelevant thing is that to say? I have an Amiga, and obviously in my opinion I think it is better than certain competing machines made by Atari. But I don't feel the need to write in saying your demo review page is crap (when it isn't, it is extremely useful) and I don't feel the need to give tips to the programmer of **Rainbow Islands** about hardware sprites and vertical scrolling. I'd like to see Mr Posemaster himself write a decent game before he starts dishing out his 'witty' comments and advice. Another annoying factor about this Chillin' Cool Guy is that he reckons you treat programmers like gods giving their life story etc, and he rounds off his sentence with a typically cool "Who cares? They are only doing a job like anyone else." Well quite a few people care actually. It is interesting to observe their programming styles, projects they're working on, and how they got to where they are now (but you couldn't possibly appreciate this as you are too busy being cool). So as a final suggestion to benefit humanity why don't you write to a few more magazines with your witty talents and humorous comment to give us all a good laugh.
Richard Kelsall, Lymm, Cheshire

This is the most printable letter we received regarding Mr A N Onymous' opinions in the previous issue.

A DARING QUESTION

Dear Sir
I am a very proud owner of both **Dragon's Lair** and **Space Ace** arcade machines. Although most of the screens in **Escape From Singe's Castle** are on the laserdisc, in some computer magazines it says: "First on laserdisc was Dragon's Lair, then Escape From Singe's Castle and then Space Ace."

I want to know if there was an Escape From Singe's Castle laserdisc. Also in the May 1990 issue you mentioned three sequels of Don Bluth games. Are they coming out on laserdisc or just on the computer and when are they expected to be out?
E Buckley, Coalville, Leicester*

We can tell you now that there is definitely no Escape From Singe's Castle arcade machine. Readysoft's 16-bit conversions are basically just a collection of scenes from the original Dragon's Lair that couldn't be fitted into the original conversion. As for ***The Sea Beast And Barnacle Bill*** *and* ***Dragon's Lair: Time Warp*** *– both were intended to be laserdisc arcade machines, but didn't make it. And when they might appear as home conversions has yet to be announced.*

I LIKE THE ONE

Dear The One
Many congratulations on your new look. Both myself and my brother have bought The One since the first issue, and we really prefer the new design, as it allows you to have many more reviews and bigger features. The only problem is, there's not enough colour anymore. The One used to be full colour, but now a lot of the reviews are in black and white? Why?
J P Mieder, Watford

I DON'T LIKE THE ONE

Dear The One
What have you done? I refer of course to the magazine's 'new' look – it's horrible. In the last issue only three of the reviews were in colour, and they were all shorter! Why is there now so much black and white, and why have the reviews got shorter? I do like the new-look cover though.
Frank Yoop, Blackpool

I ALMOST LIKE THE ONE

Dear The One
This is my first letter to you, and I'm afraid it's to complain about the 'new format'. I have bought all but the first issue and up until now it has been something to look forward to each month (Groan! Corny!). But it's true: loads of colour, full reviews, decent humour and packed full of good stuff to read. But your new format (issue 21) really does seem pretty grey in comparison with its predecessors. What the hell has happened to your clear old blue, red and green summary review boxes? Who turned the colour down? And would someone please justify ONE subject (football) dominating 27 pages! Hands up who likes reading something written at 90 degrees... (silence). What happened to multi-media articles (we don't all like football THAT much) with the old, clearer format. If you want a clear example of what direction The One should head in, take a look at the December '89 issue – now THAT was something else...
Tim Braithwaite, Sussex

This has been one hell of a bone of contention over the last four weeks, and opinion has certainly been divided – for every person who likes the new look, there's another who doesn't. The reviews have been the main quibble and a lot of people seem to think they are shorter. In fact you will find that there are just as many words and pictures, it's just it's more compact. You will see more one and two page reviews, and less of the three and four page variety. The reason for this is to allow us to cover more games – if we gave everything a huge review, there would hardly be room for anything else (and no, we can't increase the number of pages without putting up the cover price)! As for Mr Braithwaite's comments... we did a count and 27 pages of football is a bit of exaggeration. The point is taken, but Mr B's letter was the only one out of the hundreds we received that objected. And the Encyclopedia of 16-bit games to which you refer isn't supposed to be read at 90 degrees. The pages are supposed to pulled out and assembled! Anyway, this is clearly an argument that's not going to lay down and die without a fight, so keep those opinions rolling in – be they good or bad.

THE ONE AND THE SAME?

Dear The One
When I was reading your **Midwinter** Players Guide in Issue 20 I got the uneasy feeling that I read this all before. After searching my mind for minutes I suddenly remembered it. I grasped my copy of the June edition of ACE and there it was: on pages 92 and 93 I saw the same Players Guide, letter-by-letter identical to yours.

What is this? Are you and ACE sharing the same articles? If you are planning to continue doing this please let me know. Then I can save a lot of money by buying only one of both magazines.

Also, could you tell me if Ciaran Brennan, your Deputy Editor, is the same Ciaran Brennan who plays guitar and synthesizer with the Irish group Clannad. If so how did he end up being Deputy Editor of The One?
Martin Janssen, Mijnsheerenland, The Netherlands

All we can say is that we certainly didn't intend to print the same Players Guide as ACE. What happened was that both The One and ACE asked Maelstrom for a Players Guide at roughly the same time, without realising the other magazine was also after the same thing. A few lines got crossed and both magazines then printed the Guide, unaware of what was going on – by the time the mistake was spotted it was too late. But you can rest assured that it definitely won't happen again. As for the Brennan issue, our lovable ex–Dep Ed (who's now editing PC Leisure) is not, as far as we know at least, the same as the CB from breathy group Clannad.

WHAT A BIND

Dear The One
I have been buying The One magazine since April last year and now have more than enough issues to fill a binder. However I have not seen any advertising for such binders. Where can I get them? How much do they cost? My magazines are all over my room and I would be grateful (so would my mum) if you can help me out of this mess.
Andrew O'Connor, Amersham, Buckinghamshire

There are no official The One binders available as yet Andrew, but you can expect to see some advertised before the end of the year. In the meantime, it wouldn't hurt for you to tidy your room up a bit, now would it?

SPORTS SPOT

Dear The One
I own an IBM PC compatible with a 5.25" disk drive (Amstrad 1512 if you must know), and am interested in obtaining a computer football, tennis or golf game for it. There are so many different ones now on the market that I don't know which one or ones to get. Please help!
Jon Hawkins, Bristol

If it's a golf game you want, you can do no wrong with Electronic Arts' excellent ***PGA Tour Golf****, and you can see why on page 32. Tennis games on the PC are a bit thin on the ground – UbiSoft's* ***ProTennis Tour*** *is probably your best bet. As for football, you'd be well advised to hang on for the PC release of* ***Kick Off 2****. Now that should be something special...*

CAN'T SEE THE WOOD FOR THE TREES?

Dear The One
Two things to say. Firstly where did the Tips section go in Issue 21 (June). Secondly when will Kick Off 2 be out for the Amiga and will it be for 1Mb or what?
Iman Saleem, Newarthill, Motherwell

The Tips section in Issue 21 was replaced by the first instalment of the new Complete Guide To 16-bit Games. We are open to Tips queries though, so anyone stuck with any game should drop us a line. As for Kick Off 2, check out the Review on page 66 this month.

• SENSIBLE SOFTWARE'S •

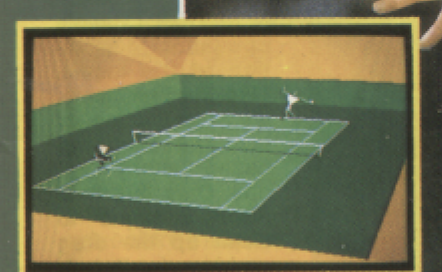
INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS

INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS IS A REVOLUTIONARY NEW TENNIS SIMULATION. THE INNOVATIVE USE OF VECTOR GRAPHICS HAS CREATED A GAME WITH UNRIVALLED PLAYABILITY AND AN UNPARALLED NUMBER OF FEATURES.

AUST. OPEN: MELBOURNE
PRIZE MONEY: $810000
6 ROUNDS
5 SETS ON CEMENT
ENTER TOURNAMENT
MONEY BREAKDOWN
RESELECT TOURNAMENT

"This is fab…a breakthrough …no-one could fail to be impressed."
C&VG 94% C&VG HIT

"It's smashing, ace and beats the competition…immense fun, demanding for novice and expert alike, the best sports game for ages."
ZZAP! 94% ZZAP! SIZZLER



Screenshots various systems.



Individual format release dates may vary.

- Remarkable new 3D real time animation system.
- One or two player games.
- Four player ability levels – amateur, semi-pro, pro and Ace.
- View the game from any one of ten "camera" angles – infinite on ST and Amiga.
- Learn to play topspin and backspin balls.
- True control over the direction of your shots.
- T.V. tennis theme tunes.
- Any-time save option.
- 64 different computer opponents, with 16 skill levels.
- 72 tournaments to play in all based on real events with genuine court conditions and prize monies.
- 4 court surfaces – grass, clay, carpet and cement – each affecting game play.
- Digitised pictures (ST and Amiga)
- Digitised voice of real Wimbledon umpire (ST and Amiga).
- Choose which 22 tournaments to play in a full tennis season, against world class competition and aim to earn a million dollars!

• C64 • C64 DISK • SPECTRUM • AMSTRAD • AMSTRAD DISK • ST • AMIGA •

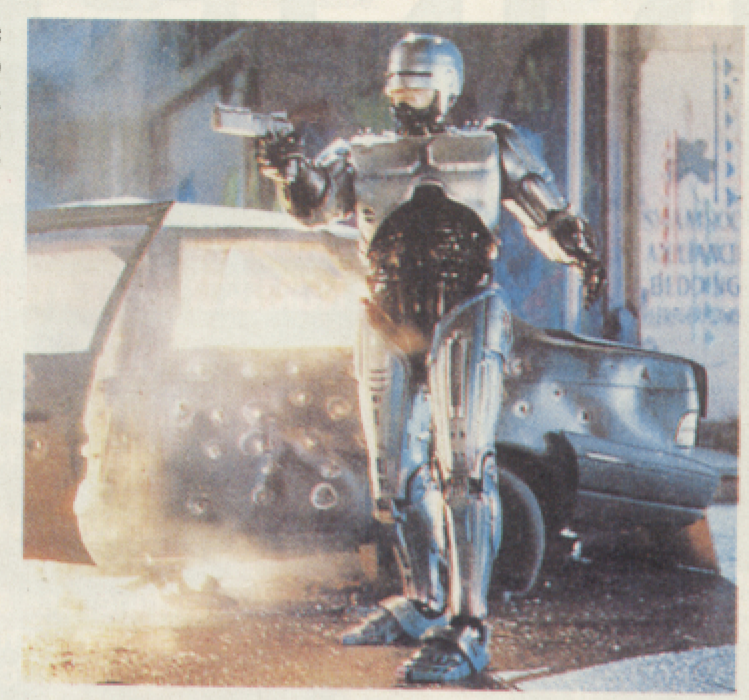
PALACE

I'D BUY THAT FOR A DOLLAR (AGAIN)!

ROBOCOP is back! The metallic lawman of the future, who smashed box-office records back in 1988 and topped the video charts in 1989, is tooled up and ready for action in the movie's sequel – imaginatively titled RoboCop 2.

The story picks up from where the first one left off. With the evil crimelord Clarence Boddiker out of the picture, RoboCop is back on the beat, dealing with a new problem in Old Detroit – narcotics. A designer drug called Nuke has flooded the city, and it's up to him to clean up the mess.

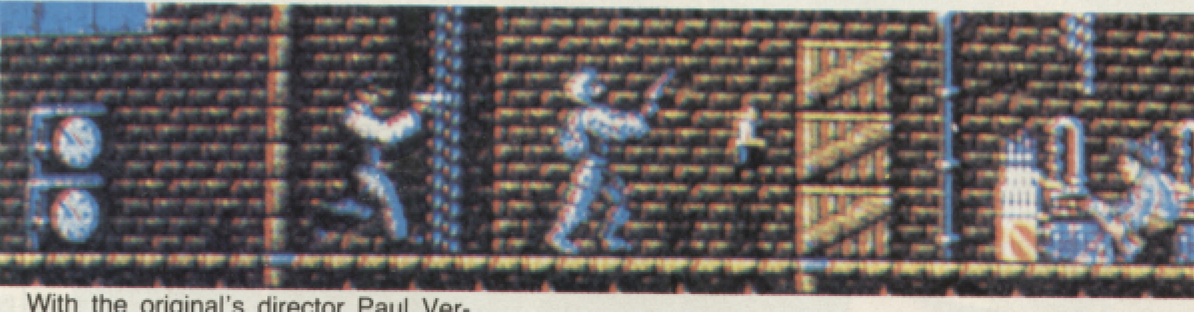
Or is it? Our Robo's got more than one problem on his hands. Omni Consumer Products, the company that built him, has designed a new, improved and even harder RoboCop Mark II (originally called 'Kong' for some reason). And its first job is to wipe out the original RoboCop so it can take 'his' place as the city's leading lawman! As you might expect, all the drug-busting action comes to a head with an apocalyptic battle between RoboCop and his super-hard rival.



ROBOCOP'S car may have been shot up and burnt out, but that doesn't stop him dishing out serious amounts of violence in a scene from RoboCop 2.



BACK in action and back on the beat, RoboCop shows off some fancy gun-handling to his partner Lewis in RoboCop 2.



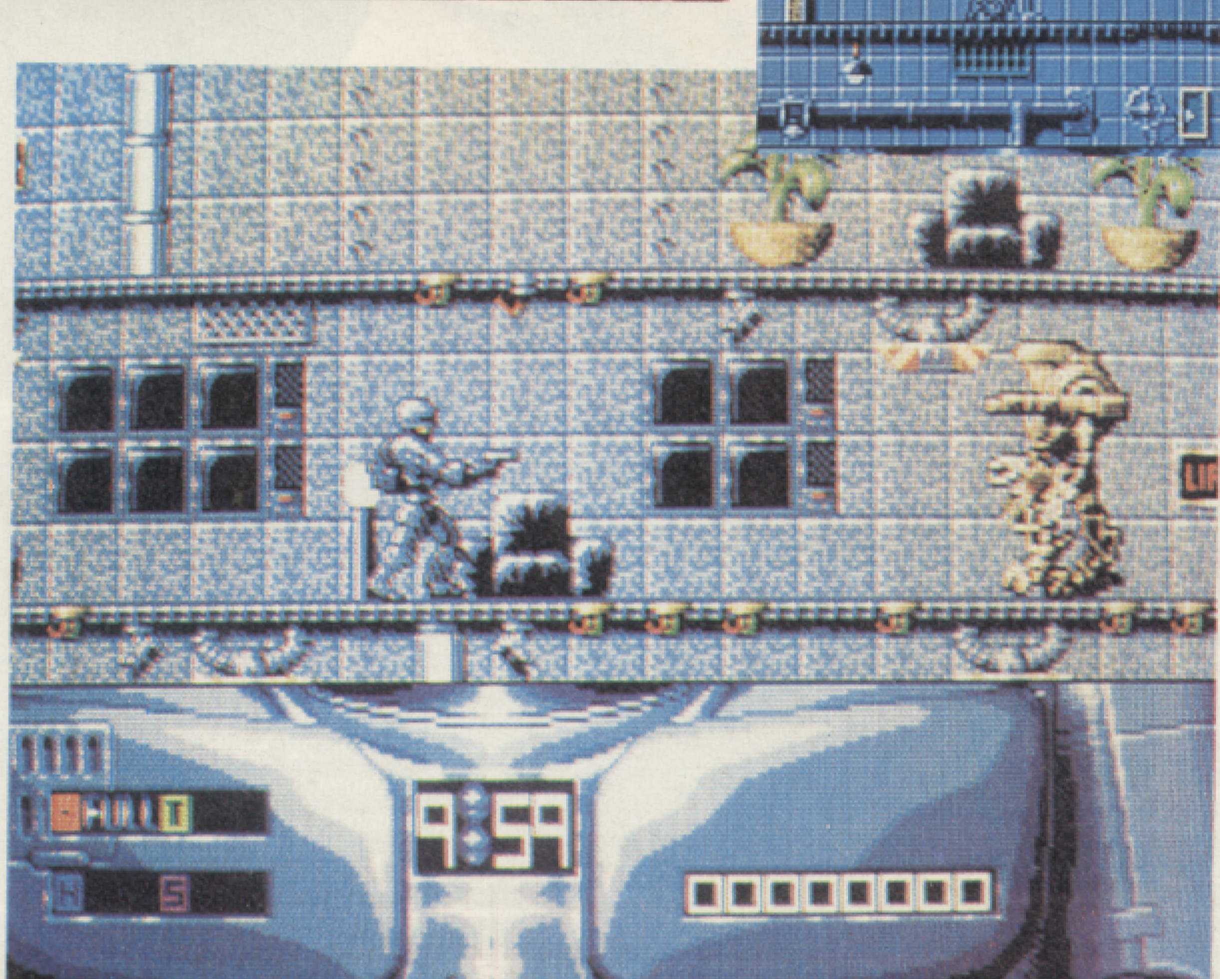
With the original's director Paul Verhoeven up to his eyes with **Total Recall**, the man at the helm of this sequel is Irvin Kershner, whose previous directing credits include **The Empire Strikes Back** and **Never Say Never Again**. Comic-book author Frank Miller (who was at one time rumoured to be in the director's chair) has penned the screenplay.

"It's a story of a man in hell, a man who's been put in a no-exit situation," says Kershner in the June issue of Premiere magazine. "He has to make the best of it or blow his brains out." According to Kershner, while there's still buckets of action to keep you on the edge of your seat, his sequel also carries the same underlying moral messages. "So many people are robots now," he says. "It's a metaphor that reaches many levels."

While much about the film may have changed since RoboCop's first outing, there's one thing that's definitely staying the same. Ocean, whose licensed adaptation of the original movie enjoyed success comparable with the film itself, is again producing the official game. And surprisingly (considering that the movie's not even due for release in the USA until later on this summer), it looks as though the project is already well underway.

A definite UK release for the movie has yet to be set, but sometime between Autumn and Christmas seems most likely. Ocean's game is slated for release at around the same time.

IN ACTION: Ocean's computer adaptation of the movie. Like the first game, it's a collection of scrolling platform-based shoot 'em ups. Only this time Robo attempts to clean up the drug problem in Detroit and finally go head to head with his robotic arch-rival.



AGAIN the gun-toting enemies come thick and fast in Ocean's software sequel. Don't these miscreants know he's invincible?

ALIVE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

APPARENTLY the effects of global warming are causing the oceans to get bigger. And that seems to include the Manchester-based software publisher, which has a flood of original and licensed product for release over the coming months.

By the time you read this, you should be able to get your hands on two sporty pieces, namely **Adidas Championship Football** and **Tie Break**, and two coin-op conversions: **Sly Spy Secret Agent** and **Midnight Resistance**. But there's a wait required for **Epic**, the space-age combat flight simulator from **Retaliator** author Martin Kenwright. Promising more polygons on screen than seems humanly possible, legions of mean alien types to kill and a sampled rendition of Holst's The Planet Suite, Epic is due to be completed before the month of July is out.

Also due to see the light of day in July is Realtime's tank-war extravaganza **Battle Command** (see Work In Progress, Issue 20), while August promises to be even more fruitful. The conversions of Taito's **Special Criminal Investigation: Chase HQ II** are currently coming together at the offices of Ice Software.

In a more original vein there's **Billy The Kid**, a multi-level shoot 'em up cum arcade adventure that puts you in the shoes of the legendary teenage outlaw William H Bonny – scourge of New Mexico at the end of the last century. Currently being put together by adventure aficionado Level 9, the PC version leads the way, with ST and Amiga bringing up the rear.

September sees the release of the official **Liverpool FC** licence, along with a rather obscure but extremely clever puzzle game from Ocean France called **Plotting** (converted from the little-known Taito coin-op).

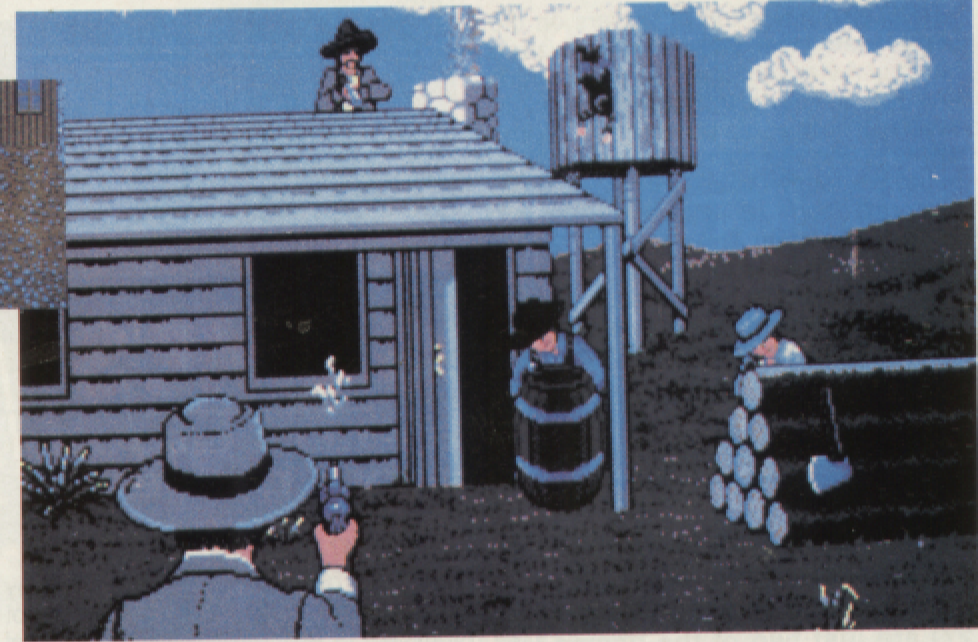
But perhaps the biggest of Ocean's Autumn licences is **Total Recall**, based on what is being heralded as "the greatest Schwarzenegger movie of all time." Paul (RoboCop) Verhoeven has reputedly spent 70 million dollars on the project. It's best described as a blood-thirsty action thriller with a psychological twist as Arnie explores the Mars of the future trying to rekindle memories of a former life. The movie's already broken box-office records in the States, and will probably do the same when it hits these shores in September. Whether the game (which is being produced by Active Minds) will fare as well remains to be seen when it's released at the same time as the movie.

As the year draws to a close, two more licensed titles are scheduled to hit the streets. William's OTT coin-op **Narc** should have weedled its way onto ST and Amiga by November (courtesy of **Silkworm** and **The Ninja Warriors** converters, The Sales Curve), along with two of three games based on Clive Barker's forthcoming fantasy flick **Nightbreed**.

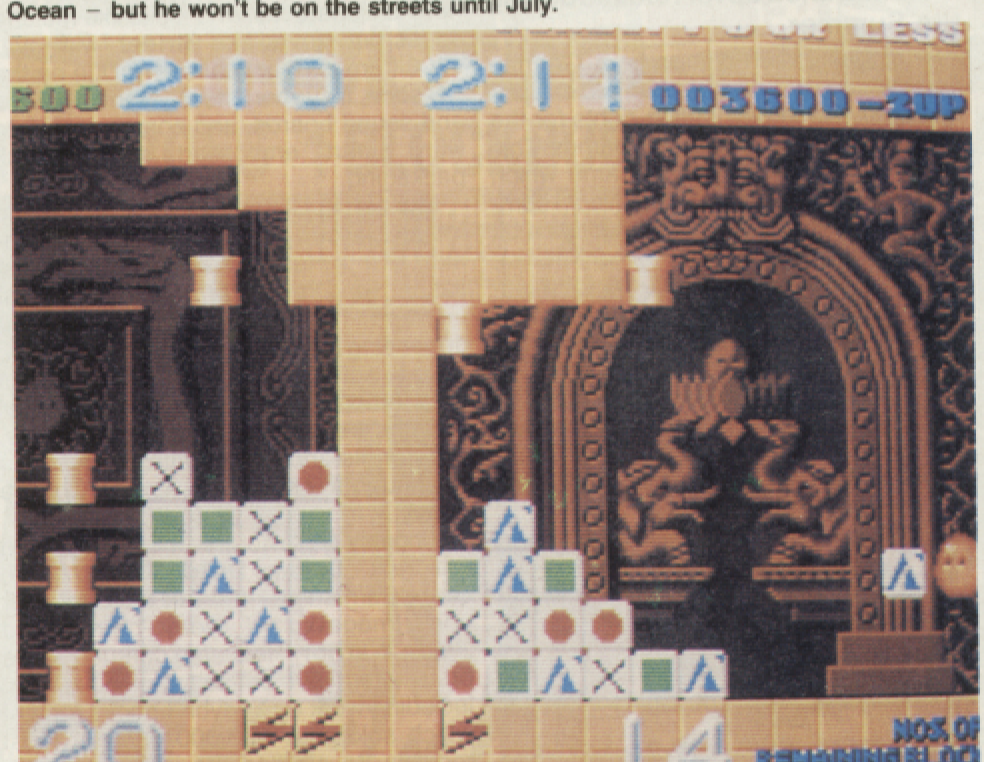




ARNOLD'S getting physical in Total Recall, due to hit UK on both big and small screens this Autumn.



HARD BUT only a child... Billy The Kid struts his stuff in EGA mode courtesy of Level 9 and Ocean – but he won't be on the streets until July.



CUTE arcade puzzle action in Plotting from Taito and Ocean France. Incredibly sweet, maddeningly addictive and, surprisingly, never heard of until recently.

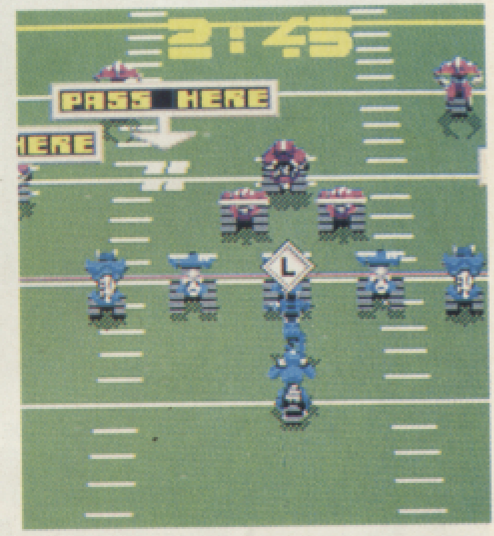
TOP TEN

Month Ending June 1990

ATARI ST

1 ▲ GREG NORMAN'S ULTIMATE GOLF
Gremlin
2 ▼ MIDWINTER
Rainbird
3 ▲ SHERMAN M4
Rainbow Arts
4 NE DRAGON'S BREATH
Palace
5 NE ITALY 1990
US Gold
6 NE CYBERBALL
Domark
7 NE CLOUD KINGDOMS
Millennium
8 NE MANCHESTER UNITED
Krisalis
9 ▲ IVANHOE
Ocean
10 NE ZOMBI
UbiSoft

Courtesy of Software Circus Ltd, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DP. Tel: (071) 436 2811.



TOP TEN

One Year Ago

ATARI ST

1 POPULOUS
Electronic Arts
2 ROBOCOP
Ocean
3 DRAGON NINJA
Imagine
4 POLICE QUEST 2
Sierra
5 DUNGEON MASTER EDITOR
Softex
6 SILKWORM
Virgin Games
7 VOYAGER
Ocean
8 THE RUNNING MAN
Grandslam
9 MICROPROSE SOCCER
MicroProse
10 KING'S QUEST TRIPLE PACK
Sierra

TOP TEN

France

ATARI ST

1 F-29 RETALIATOR
Ocean
2 IVANHOE
Ocean
3 ITALY 1990
US Gold
4 E-MOTION
US Gold
5 CRACK DOWN
US Gold
6 DRAGON'S BREATH
Palace
7 RAINBOW ISLANDS
Ocean
8 BLACK TIGER
US Gold
9 INFESTATION
Psygnosis
10 GREG NORMAN'S ULTIMATE GOLF
Gremlin

Courtesy of Micromania, France.

TOP TEN

Month Ending June 1990

AMIGA

1 NE MIDWINTER
Rainbird
2 NE THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN
Lucasfilm/US Gold
3 ▼ F-29 RETALIATOR
Ocean
4 NE ITALY 1990
US Gold
5 NE LEISURE SUIT LARRY 3
Sierra/Activision
6 ▼ BUDOKAN
Electronic Arts
7 ▼ 688 ATTACK SUB
Electronic Arts
8 RE SHADOW OF THE BEAST
Psygnosis
9 NE PIRATES!
MicroProse
10 NE SHERMAN M4
Rainbow Arts

Courtesy of Software Circus Ltd, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DP. Tel: (071) 436 2811.



TOP TEN

One Year Ago

AMIGA

1 POPULOUS
Electronic Arts
2 BLOOD MONEY
Psygnosis
3 THE RUNNING MAN
Grandslam
4 KICK OFF
Anco
5 LORDS OF THE RISING SUN
Cinemaware
6 BATTLEHAWKS 1942
Lucasfilm
7 BATTLETECH
Infocom
8 THE DUEL: TEST DRIVE II
Accolade
9 SWORD OF SODAN
Discovery
10 SILKWORM
Virgin Games

TOP TEN

Germany

AMIGA

1 IT CAME FROM THE DESERT
Cinemaware
2 RINGS OF MEDUSA
Starbyte
3 RAINBOW ISLANDS
Ocean
4 SIM CITY
Infogrames
5 INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE: THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE
Lucasfilm
6 FALCON
Spectrum HoloByte
7 TV SPORTS: BASKETBALL
Cinemaware
8 BLOCK OUT
California Dreams
9 XENON 2: MEGABLAST
Image Works
10 PIRATES!
MicroProse

Courtesy of Aktueller Software & Videospiele Markt, Germany.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

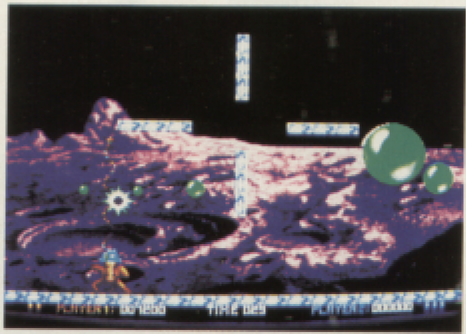
THERE'S no business like The Software Business. And right now there's no-one more busy – the company's planning no fewer than nine releases in the coming months.

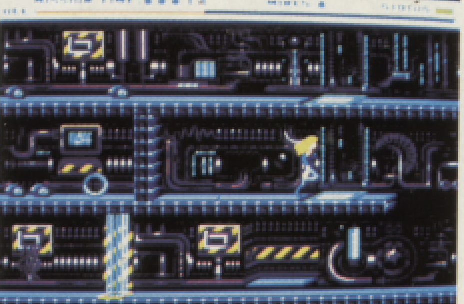
First up is **Tarot**. Claiming to reveal aspects of your personality you never even knew existed, it crosses Blackpool Pleasure Beach with psychedelic philosophy to produce a uniquely surreal experience. Each game you play is never the same as the previous one, with multiple levels, self-enlightenment and a haunting score promised.

More conventionally, those busy Business boys have signed up The Whiz Kidz, a Belgian programming team whose first game is **Ziriax**. Reputedly featuring "cunning" attack waves, a "cracking" sound-track, "hot" graphics and vast numbers of alien scum, it's a horizontally scrolling four-level progressive shoot 'em up. Available soon on Amiga only for 24.95.

TSB also has a trio of teasers on the Demonware label: **Oops-Up!** is a bizarre blend of **Asteroids** and **BreakOut** which has you travelling the known galaxy in search of space ship components. Game elements include bouncing cubes, slime, bubbles, teddy bears, frogs, chaotic platforms and 10 different weapons. Available soon on Amiga only for 24.95, with other versions to follow.

Also Amiga-only for the same price is **Final Countdown**, starring a wayward asteroid heading for earth and a beautiful female commander (that's you). However, the asteroid is not all that it appears to be... and you have to wait until the end of July if you want to unravel the mystery.


OOPS-UP!


FINAL Countdown.


BATTLE Squadron: Soon on ST.

Finally, Chris (**Grand Monster Slam**) Hulsbeck has produced a music programming tool called **TFMX**. Available now for 44.95, it boasts 256 samples and special effects (vibrato, portamento). A professional version with MIDI compatibility and enhanced features is due in the Winter.

In conjunction with thigh-slapping German programmers Kingsoft, TSB has released **Turn-It**, a Chinese strategy with over 50 levels. The aim is to turn over matching stones within a time limit – it's a kind of cross between the board games **Shanghai** and **Brainstorm**. It's available now for 19.95 on Amiga only, with a review due next month. Other formats will follow in due course.

Meanwhile, the Teutonic team is also translating Chris Browne's Sun comic strip **Hagar The Horrible** into an arcade adventure – due out in September, with a price to be announced.

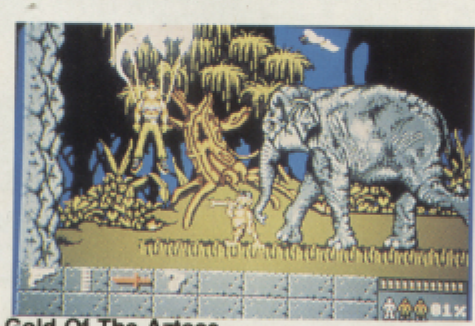
A couple of extra-time contributions from TSB are Blade Software's **Lords Of Chaos** (a fantasy strategy game similar to one of Blade's previous efforts, **Laser Squad**) and InnerPrise's **The Plague** (a shoot 'em up set in a scientific breeding ground for genetically enhanced species). Lords Of Chaos is due in September for 19.95 (ST and Amiga) and 24.95 (PC). The Plague should be available now for the Amiga, with other formats following later in the year.

1Incidentally, an ST version of Innerprise's excellent shoot 'em up **Battle Squadron** (see Review in Issue 16) is currently in production for release in the Autumn. None of the gameplay should be lost in translation, which means it's likely to be every bit as playable.

GOLDEN MOMENTS

VAXINE **(see Work In Progress in the previous issue) and** Operation Harrier **(a WIP this month on page 27) are just two of the games US Gold has lined up for release during the Summer.**

The biggest batch comes from German software team Thalion – US Gold has just acquired British distribution rights for the company's trio of forthcoming games. This includes **Atomix** (a puzzle game which involves assembly of chemical components within a time limit – it plays a bit like **Soko-Ban**, but with fewer levels), **Leavin' Teramis** (an overhead multi-directionally-scrolling arcade adventure-cum-shoot 'em up set on a space ship), and **Dragon Flight** (an impressive-looking FRPG with arcade undertones). Release dates are all reliant on whether US Gold wants to produce 8-bit versions: if it does, the games will be out from September onwards. If not, sooner.


Gold Of The Aztecs.

Gold Of The Aztecs, programmed by ex-Psygnosis coder Dave Lawson of Kinetica, is an 80-screen multi-level puzzle game-cum-arcade adventure. Its hero is a character who looks like Indiana Jones but moves like **Strider**, with over 1500 frames of animation (!). Due on the PC soon, it support most graphics modes and sound boards, and comes complete with smart embossed gold-on-black packaging.

Murder is US Gold's most enigmatic release, a joint project between programmer Grant Harrison and graphic artist Jason Kingsley. The story goes that murders have been committed and depending upon your sleuth quotient, you have to solve them in a limited amount of time. Amongst the game's more unusual features are an entire filofax, newspapers, fingerprints and interrogation sequences – enough to keep even Agatha Christie happy.

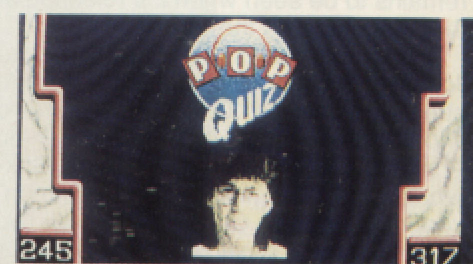
Kingsley's previous work has included Elektra's **Better Dead Than Alien**, Grandslam's **The Hunt For Red October** and ImageWorks' yet-to-be-released **Blade Warrior**. He's also pursued some pretty alternative employment in his time, including work on Ladybird books (one of which sold over 900,000 copies). Most recently he created the images for the video of the Adamski single **Killer**, using bespoke software written for him by his brother Chris on the Amiga and Atari ST.

PLAY IT AGAIN, ELITE

ALWAYS willing to please its public, Elite has announced the release of seven former full-price games on its 9.99 Encore label for Amiga and Atari ST.

Out now are **Bombjack** (a reasonable conversion of the ageing coin-op), **Thundercats** (a horizontally-scrolling hack 'em up based on the popular cartoon) and **Overlander** (an **OutRun** variant available on ST only). However, the pick of the current crop is **Buggy Boy**, the top-notch conversion of the Tatsumi coin-op, and arguably Elite's best piece of work to date.

Further releases include **Wanderer 3D** (a bizarre space romp due out on July 25), **A Question Of Sport** (based on the longest-running quiz game on TV and due in August) and **Mike Read's Pop Quiz** (almost identical to A Question Of Sport, but swapping Read for Coleman and out in September). The last two are also available for the PC.



CHEAP: Mike Read's Pop Quiz.

TOP TEN

Month Ending June 1990

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

1 ▲ ULTIMA VI
Mindscape
2 ▼ FLIGHT SIMULATOR IV
Microsoft
3 ▲ THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN
Lucasfilm/US Gold
4 NE WOLFPACK
Mirrorsoft/Novalogic
5 ▼ CHESSMASTER 2100
Mindscape
6 ▲ JACK NICKLAUS' GOLF
Accolade
7 RE F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse
8 RE BRIDGE 2150
Oxford Softworks
9 RE WESTERN EUROPE SCENERY DISK
SubLogic
10 NE TOP TEN SOLID GOLD
Cosmi

Courtesy of Software Circus Ltd, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DP. Tel: (071) 436 2811.

TOP TEN

One Year Ago

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

1 JETFIGHTER
Velocity
2 KING'S QUEST TRIPLE PACK
Sierra
3 TRACON
Wesson International
4 SILPHEED
Sierra
5 ROBOCOP
Ocean
6 FLIGHT SIMULATOR 3
SubLogic
7 F-16 COMBAT PILOT
Digital Integration
8 688 ATTACK SUB
Electronic Arts
9 SPACE QUEST 3
Sierra
10 OUTRUN
Sega

TOP TEN

USA

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

1 SIMCITY
Maxis
2 CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN
SSI
3 LEISURE SUIT LARRY III
Sierra
4 WELLTRIS
Spectrum HoloByte
5 WHERE IN TIME IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?
Broderbund
Visionary Design Technology
6 HARPOON
Three-Sixty
7 MEAN STREETS
Access Software
8 POPULOUS
Electronic Arts
9 CRIME WAVE
Access Software
10 TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL
Cinemaware

Courtesy of Login Magazine, Japan.



DOING THE MONSTER MASH

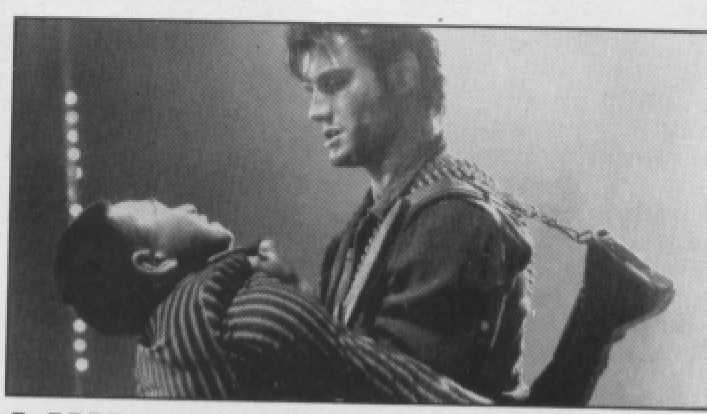
WITH NO more ammunition than a handful of movies 20th Century Fox has terrified in excess of 50 million people world-wide.

Alien and its sequel **Aliens** featured the seemingly unstoppable exploits of an insectoid acid monster that reproduced by using human beings as hosts. **Predator** on the other hand pitted Arnold Schwarzenegger against a huge outer space killer – the kind of guy who likes to turn his victims inside out and hang what's left on the trees to dry. He was so hard it took a nuclear explosion to get rid of him.

A third Aliens extravaganza and a second Predator chiller are in production at this very moment. And Activision is planning to cash in on the action in a slightly different way. Not content with using just one of the creatures to scare everyone to death, the company's plumped on an even scarier compromise and combined the two. Its imminent creature feature goes by the same title as a recently released series of Dark Horse Comics: **Alien Vs Predator**. Activision claims it's far too early in the day as yet to give any firm details on release dates or development. What it does promise though is that this special concoction for alien-lovers everywhere will be available on Amiga, ST and PC.

WHAT THE STARS ARE PLAYING
ELDRITCH THE CAT

SO WHAT'S been keeping the team behind **Projectyle** (page 51) busy in its Liverpool offices this month? According to Marc Dawson, the main attraction has been Millennium's **Resolution 101** (It's nice and fast.) and **California Games** on Atari's hand-held wonder, the Lynx. But what's impressed them most this month is **Golf** on Fujitsu's CD-based mega-machine, the FM Towns. It's spot on, Marc claims. The team's also been playing **Kid Gloves** (Quick bouncy fun.) and **Hound Of Shadow**. But hold on – didn't Eldritch write that? No – it was done by another Eldritch. We couldn't believe it when we heard that another developer called Eldritch had signed with Electronic Arts within a month of ourselves. Isn't life spooky?



A MARVEL-OUS STORY

TODAY a Marvel comic, tomorrow a movie and a computer game. The Edge is currently putting the final brushstrokes to the beefy biceps of their version of The Punisher.

The story's loosely based on the adventure **The Circle Of Blood** and features the scourge of the sewers himself, encountering level upon level of vicious opponent and blowing the bad guys right out of town.

Unlike the film of the same name, which was released last month and stars a motorbike-bound Dolph Lundgren clad in un-Punisher-like leathers, the game aims to be a little more faithful to the comic original. Designed by Tim Langdell and Mack and programmed by Steve Cargill (**Garfield** and **A Winter's Tail**), first-person perspective death and destruction Punisher-style should be available for ST and Amiga, complete with a PSS soundtrack, come July. If it does well, a PC version will eventually follow.

SHELF TALKERS

ESSENTIAL SOFTWARE OF THE LAST THREE MONTHS
(In Alphabetical Order)

CASTLE MASTER
Incentive

HAMMERFIST
Activision

INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS
Palace Software

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT II: ANTHEADS
Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft

KLAX
Domark

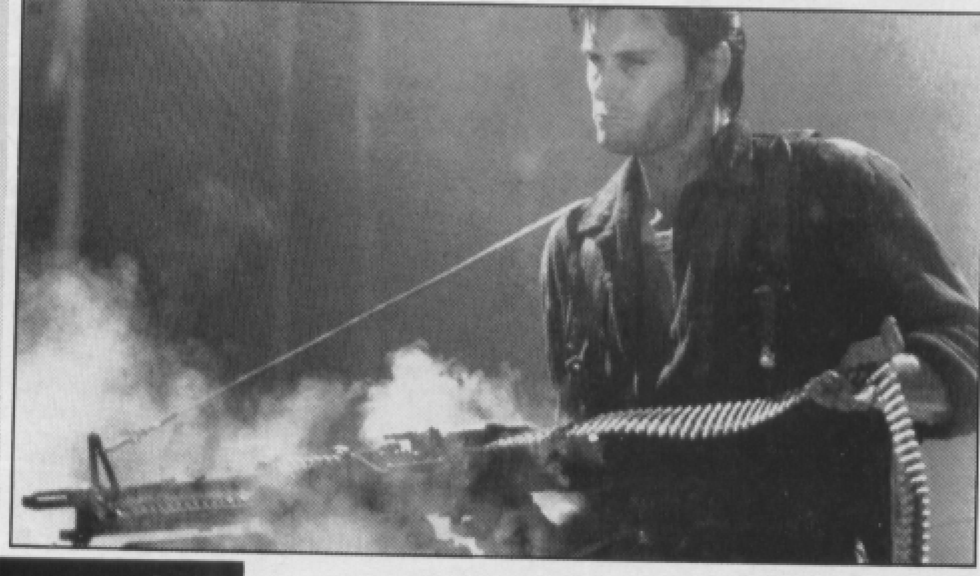
MIDWINTER
MicroProse

PLAYER MANAGER
Anco

RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse

TREASURE TRAP
Electronic Zoo

WARHEAD
Motion Picture House



THICKER THAN WATER?

Five games to make your blood boil...

BAD BLOOD
(Origin)
Role Playing romp set in a post-apocalyptic America.

BLOOD MONEY
(Psygnosis)
Bloody hard multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up.

BLOODWYCH
(ImageWorks)
Dungeons and monsters abound in this two-player Dungeon Master variant.

CAPTAIN BLOOD
(Infogrames)
Innovative space-age arcade adventure with music and speech from Jean Michel Jarre's Zoolook.

GRIMBLOOD
(16 Blitz)
Blood-curdling Gothic whodunnit from Midwinter man Mike Singleton.

WHAT THE STARS ARE PLAYING
CREATIVE MATERIALS

ACCORDING Creative's Nick Vincent, the **Operation Harrier** team (see page 27) is currently very impressed with the Amiga version of Rainbird's **Midwinter** – and quite rightly so, too. Even so, Ocean's **Rainbow Islands** is still going strong in the popularity stakes, with virtually the whole team still playing Graftgold's top-notch Taito conversion.

WHAT THE STARS ARE PLAYING
ROWAN SOFTWARE

BETWEEN programming (and playing) **Flight Of The Intruder** (page 59) and **Falcon: The Mission Disks Volume 2** (page 48), the boys at Rowan have been having fun with that old favourite **Silkworm**, along with Rainbow Arts' **Rock'n'Roll** and Empire's **PipeMania**. With so much on the team's plate there's not been a lot of time for anything else. It's tough at the top.



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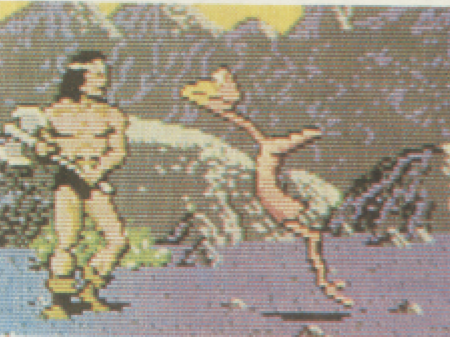
DOMARK'S TRIPLE TREAT

WITH the conversions of Atari Games' Klax **and** Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters **out and about at last, Domark's now concentrating on three different licensed wares.**

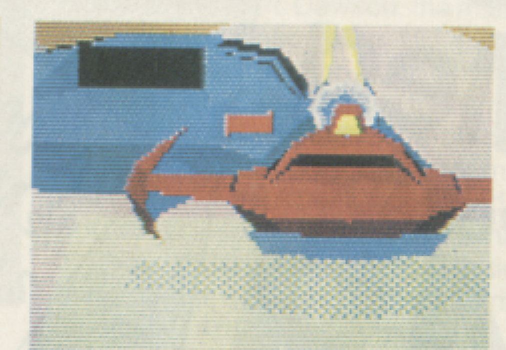
First out is the **Heroes** compilation, comprising **Barbarian 2**, **Star Wars**, **Licence To Kill** and **Running Man** – it's due for a Summer release on all three formats, at prices to be announced.

Not content with converting current Bond licences, Domark has dug into the archives to unearth **The Spy Who Loved Me**. Like the company's last Bond outing, **Licence To Kill**, it features a series of action sequences based on scenes from the film. The price is 19.99 (ST and Amiga) and 24.99 (PC), with a release date set for September.

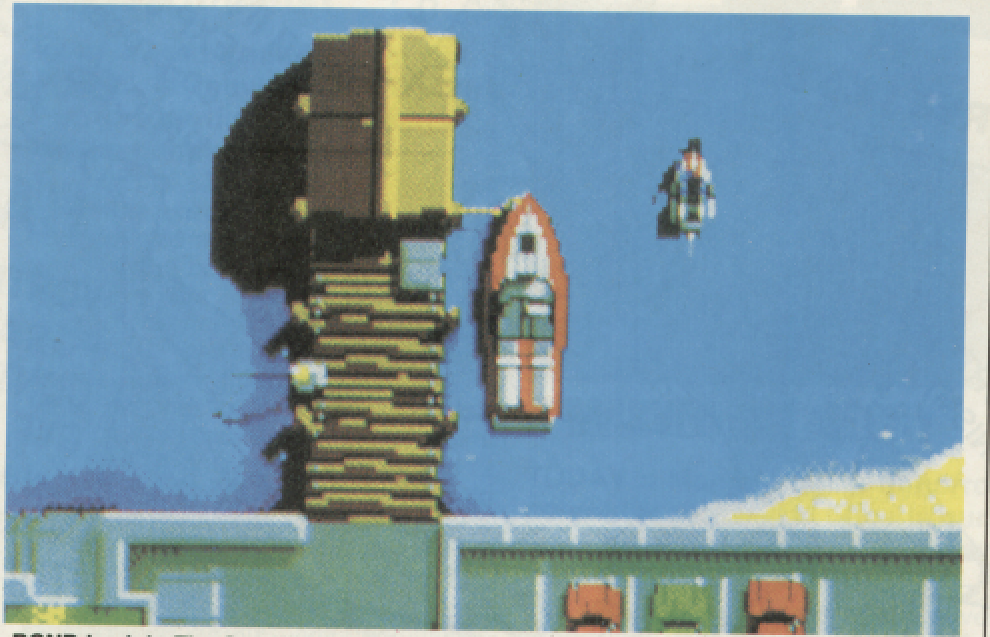
Ade Rotberg at The Kremlin (Domark's development team) is currently undertaking the task of converting the Atari Games' incredible **S.T.U.N Runner** to the PC, ST and Amiga (STUN stands for Sprite Tunnel Underground Network by the way). The arcade game boasts an array of impressive statistics, including over 256 colours on screen – a feat which will only be matched by the VGA PC version. Atari ST and Amiga versions will have to make do with 16 colours. The Kremlin is confident that a lot of the original's speed (between four and 10 frames a second depending on the objects used) will be maintained. Atari Games supplied the team with the tunnels and traffic data, so the gameplay should be identical in essence. Using the same 3D engine as Hard Drivin', the order of the day will still be hurtling down 3D tunnels. That's not to say though, that no compromises are being made: there are less points on the objects and the Amiga's sampled sounds couldn't be fitted into the ST.



BARBARIAN 2: compiled.



Early daze: S.T.U.N. Runner.



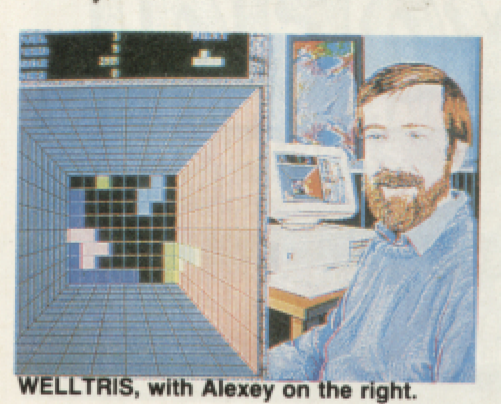
BOND back in The Spy Who Loved Me.

WELL WELL WELL...

THE GAME that got more people thinking than Rubik's Cube is back.

Alexey Pazhitnov, creator of the phenomenal dexterity game **Tetris**, has now come up with a sequel in the form of **Welltris** – so called because the action takes place in a large well. The basic theme is pretty much the same as in Tetris – fit the oddly-shaped blocks together to create lines – but now there's a twist...

A playing area comprising an eight-by-eight grid means you can now create lines in more than one dimension, which provides an extra strategic boost. Infogrames is the lucky firm to have snapped up Welltris, and has set a provisional release date of sometime this summer.



WELLTRIS, with Alexey on the right.

SUBS, GUNS, BALLS AND PIRATES

DIVERSITY seems to be the name of MicroProse's game at the moment, as its quartet of coming attractions for the next few months couldn't be more different if they tried.

The Tetbury team has just unleashed the Amiga version of **Pirates!**, even though the ST version has been around for over a year and the PC version for almost two. If you hadn't already guessed, Pirates! is a swashbuckling simulation set on the high seas for armchair seafarers. A time when men were men – and so were the women. Eye patches and wooden legs are not included in the price of 24.99.

The long-awaited sequel to the award-winning **Universal Military Simulator** should be published on the Rainbird label within the next couple of weeks on ST, Amiga and PC. Programmed by Ezra Sidran of the US company Intergalactic Development and titled **UMS II** (surprise surprise) it's a massively enhanced version of the original. For example, where in UMS you could fight single battles over 15,000 acres, UMS II allows you to fight whole campaigns over territories as large as 200,000 square miles, with the ability to zoom in to small details and out to whole armies.

Finally, there's **Fireball**, a future sport with an unusual viewpoint: a scrolling forced-perspective 3D environment. It features teams of robots battling for victory and promises violence, speed and plenty of fancy ball-work. Currently under development on the ST, its release date is set for August.

MINDSCAPE GOES CRUISING

A HOST of new PC product and some long-awaited ST and Amiga conversions are due from Mindscape during the Summer and Autumn.

The action kicks off with the release of Origin's **Bad Blood**, a "revolutionary" role-playing game set in the future after a mutant uprising. Designed by Chris Roberts (author of **Times Of Lore**), it has a novel graphic twist – the entire game is viewed through the screen of a wrecked TV on top of a radioactive junk pile! Unfortunately Bad Blood is only available for the PC at present – but at least ST and Amiga owners can get their hands on the 16-bit versions of the motorcycle race game **Harley Davidson: The Road To Sturgess** and the long-awaited conversions of the surgical simulator **Life & Death** (see Review in Issue Twelve).

The sequel to the award-winning strategy game **Balance Of Power** is also released on the PC in July. Entitled **Global Dilemma**, it's been designed and programmed by the original's author Chris Crawford. And once again the player has a God-like amount of power at his or her fingertips.

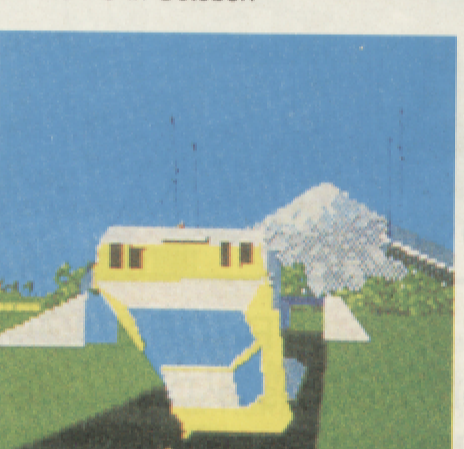
In August the Surrey-based firm releases what has to be its biggest movie licence to date. Based on the world's most prestigious stock-car racing event, the Daytona 500, **Days Of Thunder** stars Tom Cruise as racing driver Cole Trickle. The game is currently being put together by Creative Materials (ST and Amiga) and Argonaut (PC – which should appear first). Not surprisingly it's more than just a little bit driving orientated, promising viewpoints from the same camera angles used in the film.

In a more original driving vein, October sees the release of **Skid Marks**, a surreal 3D racer in the **Hard Drivin'** mould. Details of the ST and Amiga conversions have yet to be announced.

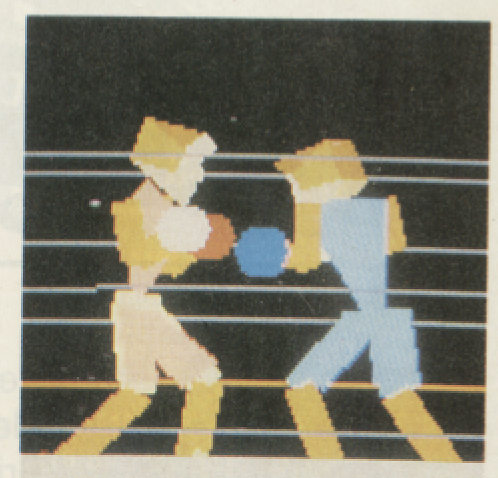
On the sporting front, there's a boxing simulation with the working title of **4D Boxing**. Three of the D's come from the novel visual approach, with polygons used to give the combatants a more realistic feel. As for the fourth D... no doubt all will become clear when the game's released on the PC in October.



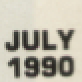
SKID MARKS.



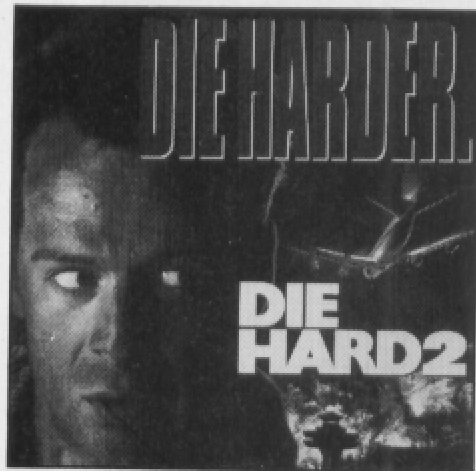
"BUILD me a car and I'll win you Daytona." Tom Cruise in Days Of Thunder.



BOXING clever in 3D.







YOU ONLY DIE TWICE

ACTIVISION'S latest film licence fishing trip has netted the rights to produce computer interpretations of the forthcoming potential blockbuster Die Hard 2.

Like its predecessor, the film features a band of terrorists holding Bruce Willis' chums hostage – only this time the action takes place at Washington's Dulles Airport.

Officer John McClane (Willis) is waiting at the airport for his wife to land, when along comes a swarm of moustache-twiddling Latin American terrorists to spoil the homecoming. The set of Die Hard 2 is remarkable in itself, and might help to explain why the movie went way over budget – it features a model airport with a hundred miniature aeroplanes, a 360 degree city horizon and an artificial snowstorm.

Work on the game has yet to begin, and so it won't appear until the end of this year at the earliest. It's not even clear whether the 3D perspective used in the PC version of **Die Hard** will be carried over to the sequel – more news as and when.



LABOUR OF LOVE

THE LATEST news from Millennium is the imminent appearance of Yolanda.

Based around the 12 labours of Hercules, it's a fast-paced platform game which first appeared on 8-bit half a decade ago (under the name **Hercules** from Interdisc), and later resurfaced as a budget release.

Programmed by veteran coder Steve Bak, Yolanda features over 50 randomly-selected levels and a three-level trainer – if it's anything like the 8-bit versions it should prove frustratingly addictive. The asking price is 19.99 on ST and Amiga.

WHOOPS!

IN LAST month's Vaxine Work In Progress, Andy Beverage was incorrectly identified as Martin Day. Sorry about that boys.

WHOOPS II!

THE ADDRESS given for CDS on page 106 of the previous issue (Issue 21) is incorrect. Anyone intent on getting hold of Brian Clough (in the Football Fortunes sense of course) should contact: CDS Software Limited, Nimrod House, Beckett Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN2 4AD. Tel: (0302) 321134. Apologies to all concerned.



A WELL-TIMED SEQUEL

NO-ONE could accuse Mirrorsoft of hanging about: it's just signed up the licence to convert back To The Future: Part III **before it's even finished its adaptation of** Back To The Future: Part II!

The release of the third game in the trilogy is due around the end of the year, at the same time as the video. It features Marty McFly venturing back in history once more, this time to the Wild West (1885 to be precise) to save Doc Emmett Browne from the evil Buford Tannen (town villain and great-grandaddy of Biff). Nothing has been finalised on the gameplay front, but it's expected to be a multi-level arcade adventure based on the film's action sequences. The conversion spade-work will be performed by Probe on all three formats and you can expect to pay 24.99 apiece for them.

Even more up-to-date is Mirrorsoft's acquisition of the licence to the movie **Predator 2**. Details regarding the film are scarce (apart from the fact that it does feature the reappearance of the Bloodthirsty alien hunter, this time in a city environment, but it doesn't star Arnie Schwarzenegger – Danny Glover plays the hero's role in the sequel). Understandably there's even less known about the game. What is known is the release date: sometime around Christmas.

CREATING AMOSTER

AFTER a two-year wait, AMOS**, the game creator for the Amiga, is finally here.**

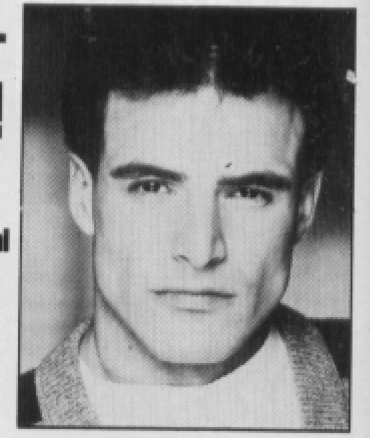
Mandarin's justification for the gap between this and the ST version (**STOS**) is AMOS' enhanced capabilities: "STOS is good but AMOS is 10 times better," it claims.

Written by legendary French programmer Jawx (of **Chickin' Chase** and **Raging Beast** fame), it's a development tool with more than 500 different commands, allowing users to create arcade and adventure games, demos and educational programs – it even stretches to graphical databases and video titles. Hardware and software sprites can be rapidly defined and animated, and up to eight screens can be displayed at once, each with its own colour palette and resolution – there's even multi-level parallax scrolling.

Included in the package is a sprite editor, two arcade games, a graphic adventure, and an educational game to get you started. It's available now for a penny short of 50.

A Day In The Life... THIS MONTH!

Of Derek Baboon (International Programming Star and Thoroughly Nice Guy)



10:00 Get up. Stretch. Do octal-decimal conversion exercises in my head (good exercise!) while in toilet.

10:10 Sex with West Wing Chambermaid (Dolly the Teasemaid).

10:12 Code 3D demo I had idea for in dream last night on Archimedes in ARM code.

10:13 Go down for breakfast. Opt for dining hall Number Five. Kitchen Staff cheer (as usual).

10:35 Interview with Austrian computer trade magazine.

10:50 Go punting on the Isis.

14:35 Late lunch in the Oasis with my Accountants. Staff push three tables together to accommodate. They advise me to form another two off-shore companies. Take American citizenship.

15:45 Wander back to mansion. Personal Secretary has message from Bank Manager. He wants to name new wing of branch after me – 'Baboon Wing'. Write a short AI program to decide whether or not to accept. Program says no – will give too much hassle from local Journalists. Tell Secretary.

15:48 Bank Manager tells Secretary he will increase interest rate on deposit account to 30 per cent if I accept naming. Phone Agent. She phones Bank Manager and negotiates 40 per cent. She really is very good, you know.

15:55 Interview with Italian style magazine. I am in running for 'Style Dude '89' award. Apologise – there's no shelf-space left for any more awards. Consider buying larger mansion.

16:20 Take Liberian citizenship and marry Chambermaid (for tax reasons).

16:35 Quickie divorce (grounds of non-consummation).

16:45 Go walking in grounds – nice day so I decide to walk all the way round perimeter.

20:20 Give up halfway round. Use mobile phone to call out private helicopter.

20:35 Bathe in asses' milk – you just can't get decent asses' milk these days. Consider investing in asses' milk futures.

21.00 Dinner with Clive and some Old Friends. I arrive at dining hall Number Two in a C5. Everyone pisses themselves laughing (except Clive, who doesn't see the joke). Poor old Clive. He tells everyone about his new solar-powered auto-gyro. Top secret! Also his new AI computer that predicts the future in real-time! Everyone laughs. Good old Clive. Where would we be without him?

22.20 Coffee in the South Wing. Clive apologises – he must leave. He has idea for a new kind of electric car – this time it has only two wheels... but one of them is very wide. We all piss ourselves laughing (again). Never a dull moment, eh?

22.45 Decide to program, but can't think what music to listen to. Write a program on Archimedes to decide for me.

22.47 Program can't decide either. Recode on Cray-YMP in basement.

22.50 Cray can't decide either. Decide not to play any music.

22.51 Start coding. I've been writing my next 3D game for five years now. So far I've produced about 239 Meg of code in demos... but without one good idea. I'm sure one'll come soon. Decide to refine polygon drawing routine instead. It's now 75K long, but there's room for some improvement, I think...

2.25 Routine fully optimised! It now is 198K long... but goes five per cent quicker than before! A successful day's work!

2.27 Sex with East Wing Chambermaid.

2.29 Blissful sleep (as usual). Another good day!

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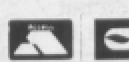
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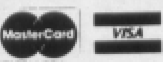
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THE TOWERING INFERNAL

Deep in the land of the frankfurter, Pogo is making a comeback. Kati Hamza smokes him out.



GREEN bug-eyed, big-mouthed and eminently lovable: our hero Pogo. The identity of the evil uncle, meanwhile, remains a mystery – the scenario has yet to be invented.

THE STORY of **Nebulus 2** is a tale of two cities. It starts in Abingdon back in 1987. That's when Nebulus The Original, designed and programmed by the multi-talented John Phillips, began its life as an 8-bit game. The adventures of the lovable Pogo, as he leapt and shuffled his way along the perilous ledges, stairways and platforms of 16 different revolving towers, were devious, incredibly playable and got rave reviews. A year or so later Mr Phillips converted them to 16-bit and again received almost universal acclaim.

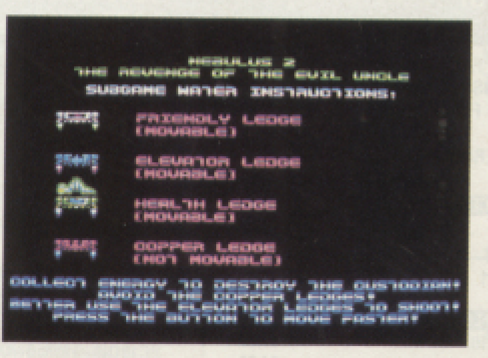
Time passed. Then one spring day in 1989, in Hildesheim, just south of the North German city of Hanover, Tobias Prinz, Florian Sauer and Felix Schmidt decided to program an Amiga demo and send it to a software house. They got together with two other friends, called themselves Infernal Bytes, opted for a 16-bit conversion of **Paradroid** and sent the specification to Hewson. Paradroid was already for conversion by its author Andrew Braybrook but Hewson was so impressed with what the young German contingent could do that it offered them Nebulus 2 instead.

The Infernal Bytes crew had just one proviso: their homework had to come first. All three members of the team currently working on the project are heavily preoccupied with their Abitur – the German equivalent of 'A' levels. And that's one reason why Nebulus 2, something that they just about manage to squeeze into their spare time, has been more than a year in development and probably won't be finished until October.

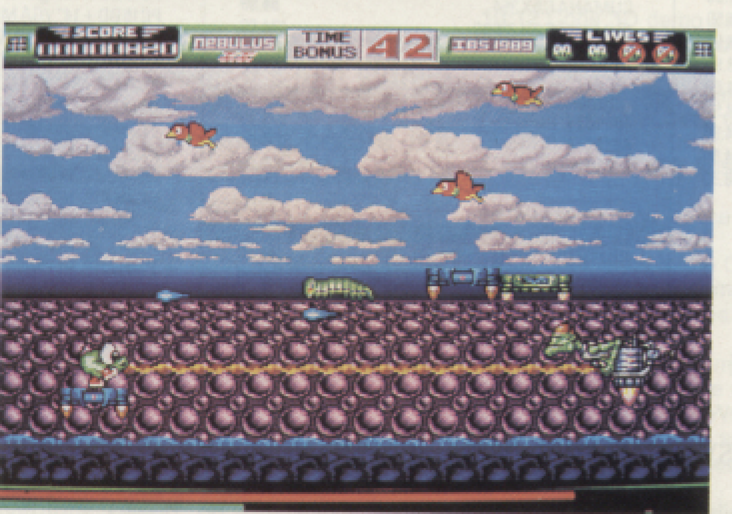
In essence, the sequel is more of the same. Pogo's still the star and for reasons as yet undisclosed, he's been entrusted with the task of demolishing a further 20 towers. Sixteen are orthodox vertical constructions, complete with elevators, platforms and a selection of virulent aliens: the other four are towers laid on their side. Instead of working your way up, you work your way along.

Florian, the programming brain behind the Infernal Bytes, was able to draw on John Phillips' original source code and reckons he's managed to improve on it. "Personally, I think the ST and Amiga conversions of Nebulus left something to be desired. John Phillips had some brilliant ideas which he translated really well on to the 64 and the Spectrum, but technically the ST and Amiga versions didn't really exploit the potential of 16-bit to the full."

> **"The ST and Amiga conversions of Nebulus left something to be desired. John Phillips had some brilliant ideas which he translated really well on to the 64 and the Spectrum, but technically the ST and Amiga versions didn't really exploit the potential of 16-bit to the full."**
>
> **Nebulus 2 Programmer Florian Sauer**



COLOUR-coded tiles are one feature that Nebulus didn't have. In Nebulus 2 exactly where you stand when you perform a particular action is vital. Unless you stand on the right kind of platform you can't shoot any of the monsters.



THE CONCEPT of horizontal towers was the brainwave of Paul, the game's Project Manager at Hewson. This isn't the final design – the finished towers should stand further out of the water to emphasise the 3D. At the moment playability also needs a lot of tweaking. Originally, horizontal levels were more difficult and took longer to complete than vertical ones – a feature Florian was keen on but about which nobody else agreed. In the end democracy prevailed. In the interests of playability all four horizontal towers are currently being shortened.

Working exclusively on the Amiga has given Florian the chance to produce a faster, slicker game. The graphics are more polished and feature a wealth of detail – including eight different layers of super-smooth parallax scrolling. How all that's going to translate on to the ST is someone else's problem – Thalion Software's to be exact. In their own particular corner of Germany, the programmers of the puzzler **Atomix** and the beat 'em up **Chambers Of Shaolin** are beavering away on an early ST version. "Thalion is capable of doing all sorts of weird and wonderful things with an ST – stuff that I'm sure I could cope with if I had to but don't have the experience to do really well."

The parallax may look impressive but it hasn't been the toughest programming job so far – Florian reckons that was the playability. What might strike you as just right with six months of almost solid practice under your belt can prove all too difficult for someone fresh to the game. In Nebulus' case problems of difficulty are usually resolved by talking to Hewson. Florian is philosophical: "If I like something, 10 to one, the rest of the world doesn't think it's quite right or finds it too difficult. I just go back and sort it out."

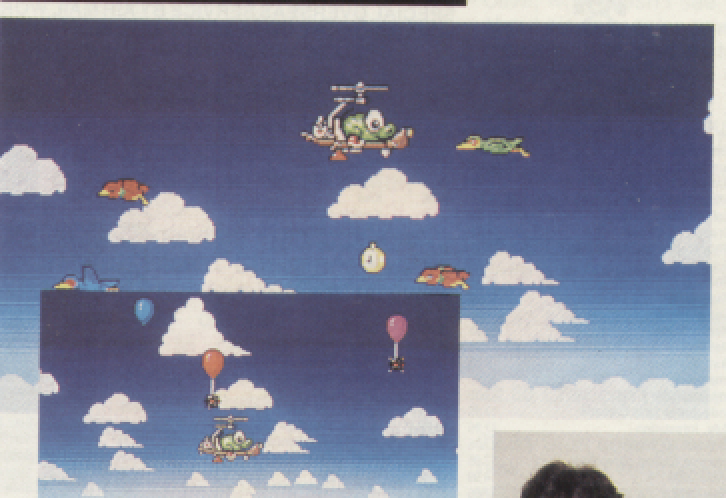
Another major operation has been perfecting the tower's 3D shape. "To get it right you have to start drawing at the back of the tower and work your way forward. Getting all the bricks to fit exactly in line so that the perspective was correct was definitely one of the most time consuming aspects." That aside, Florian claims that the rest of the project has mostly been a question of plain hard graft. "It's a matter of motivation. We're pretty lazy so we just have to keep pushing ourselves."

The game's design hasn't been finished yet – but so far it's definitely been a communal effort. Florian and Tobias practice their own particular brand of brain-storming. "We sit down or got into town or take a walk in the woods and just talk to each other about whatever comes into our head. We discuss everything – good ideas, bad ideas – and then we just think about them. At that stage whether it's possible technically or not isn't important – the vital factor is playability. It's only when we've decided exactly what we want that we sit down and worry about the hardware aspect: how many sprites we can put on screen, where to stick the playfield, that sort of thing."

As for what Infernal Bytes is going to be doing in the future, Florian isn't really prepared to think that far ahead. His dream is to get together with Tobias and put together a near-finished product without having to stick to deadlines or anyone else's specifications. Exactly what this would be is something he's not absolutely sure about but he's convinced it should be "something revolutionary".



ONE OF Infernal's original additions is a series of bonus collectables. Pogo can only reach the top of certain towers if he's in possession of a grappling hook or a pair of suction boots – essential equipment for negotiating floors which collapse into slides.



THE ORIGINAL inter-tower submarine journey has been joined by two extra sub-games: one on land and this one in the sky. Pogo's natty flying machine is equipped with a sharp spike. Stab the birds to get a bonus clock for extra time . . . then spike the balloons to keep it.



COCKY or cool? Florian Sauer and Tobias Prinz.







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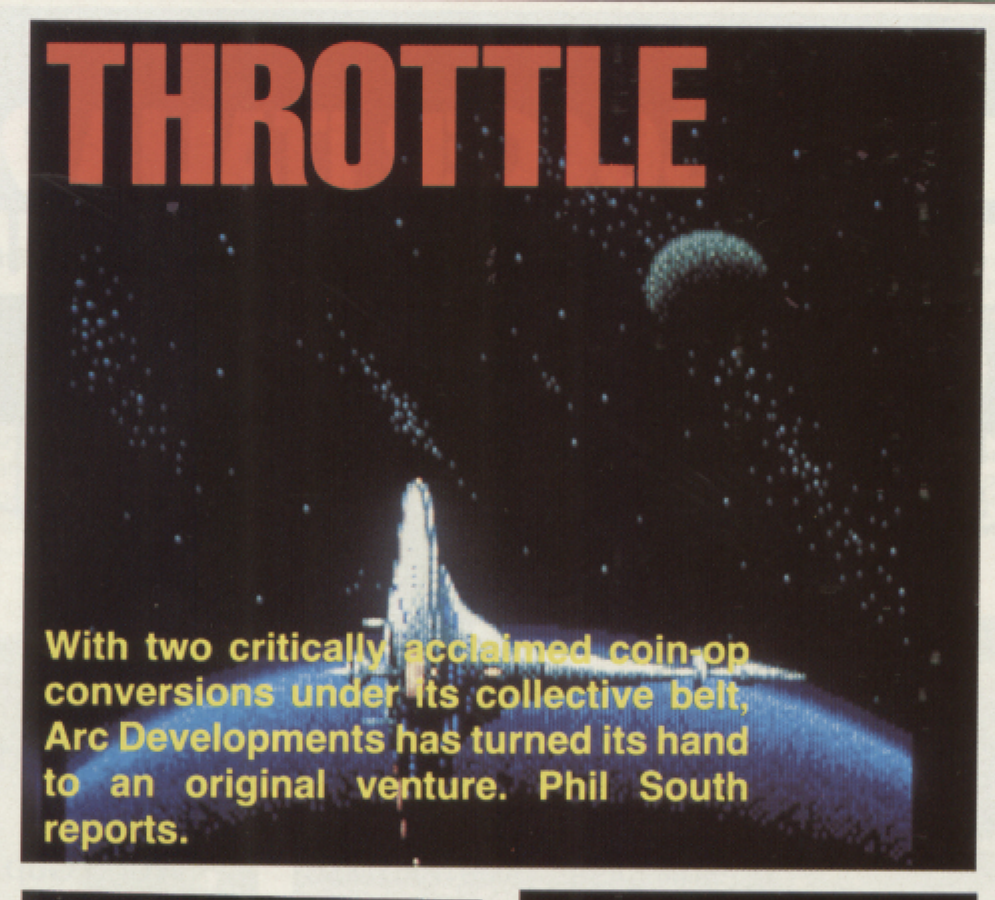
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FULL THROTTLE



AS **RESTRICTOR** is Arc's first original project, only programmer Richard Underhill and artist Paul Walker are working on it. Surprisingly, and in complete contrast to being given a detailed brief for conversion, the boys are making it up as they go along. Only when the Amiga version is complete will the others follow.

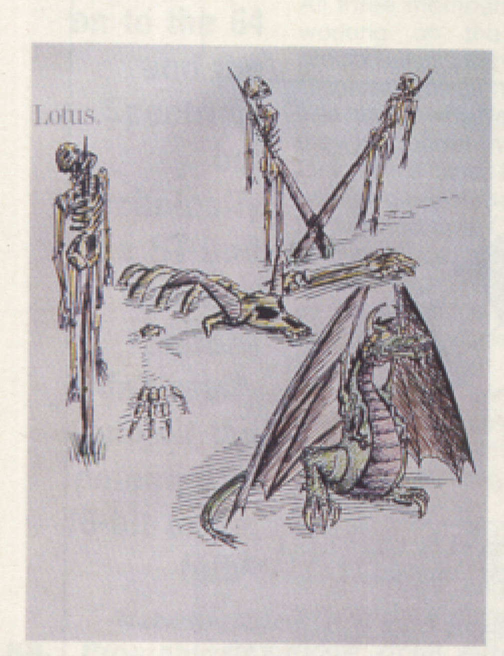
"It started with me and Rich," Paul reveals. "Rich always comes up with demos of new techniques and says: 'Hey what do you think of this?' And then I put some graphics in, and that's the start. We did something ages ago, just a little thing on the side, which never got further. It just so happens this one has expanded out and become a full project. So this is only the second try."

Restrictor's a race against time. The player drives through alien landscapes in first a car, and then a compact aircraft, towards a planet at the centre of each solar system-cum-level. At the centre of each level is a reactor to destroy or Boss to defeat, and in this way save the universe.

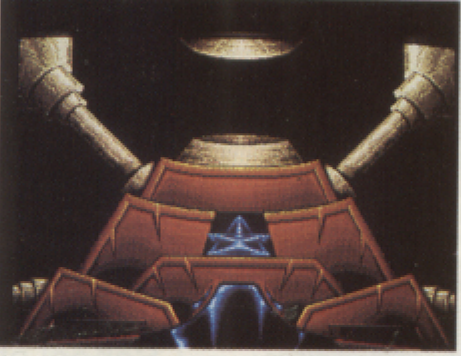
The look and feel of the game is best described as a cross between **OutRun**, **R-Type**, **Galaxy Force** and **Afterburner** all rolled into one. Work began in April, but already the graphics and game ideas are coming together at an alarming rate.

Has it been a liberating experience having so much freedom with a project? "I don't really want to do arcade conversions any more," says Richard. "It's too difficult. With this if I can't do something one way I'll change it for something just as good, whereas in a conversion it's in the game so that's it. With **Crack Down** we got criticised for having small windows and a big window over the top. It could have been done better, but the arcade machine does it that way! There's nothing you can do about it."

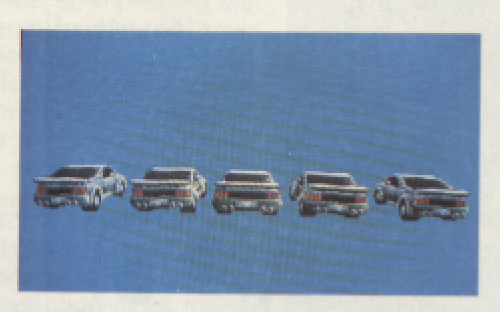
Despite loose deadlines to allow the team to get the game absolutely right, Restrictor should be previewed at the European Computer Entertainment Show in September.



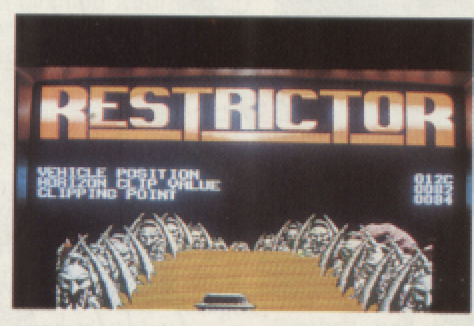
A SAMPLE page from one of Paul Walker's bulging notebooks, showing some ideas for obstacles and scenery which may or may not end up in the game. Bones will feature quite heavily in the finished design, as these fine anatomical specimens show.



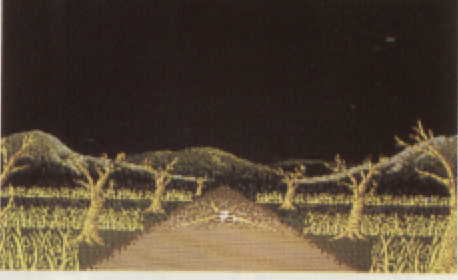
END-OF-LEVEL Bosses change with each solar system, and exactly how you deal with them is as yet undecided. But Paul's sure of one thing: "We want different guardians for each solar system. The amount of solar systems and different graphics we have in the game depends on how much time we have."



THE PLAYER'S vehicles were all ray traced at first – to ensure that they looked right from all directions. Although the car pictured here only has a turning sequence, Paul is working on views from above and below for jumping and dropping into ditches.



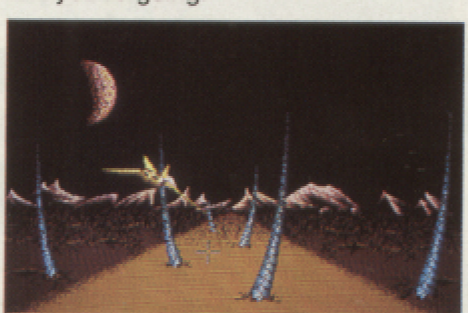
RESTRICTOR in all its original glory – this is from where the idea emerged. The road scrolls smoothly up and down, flipping the car up in the air. The winged skulls down the side of the road provide the Speed Cues, all of them scaled from the same drawing.



THE AIRCRAFT speeds down the road through a marshland planet.

ROAD BETWEEN THE LINES

With Restrictor, Richard has created an effective road movement which speeds ahead of previous games. "Most driving games have that familiar red and white chequerboard, but I didn't want that," he explains. The secret seems to be in the real-time object scaling. Paul only has to draw each object once and Richard can instantly whip it up into 32 different sizes. "That came from another thing I was messing around with after that shoot 'em up we were doing. I came up with this algorithm on the 64, allowing 256 scaling levels if you want them. I've expanded that on the Amiga. It runs in the background, when it's got time. As long as I make sure it's created those object by the time it needs them, it runs fine." It's fast, too. "Having a flexible scaling routine means you can have more graphics in the game. And having a lot of objects means you have a lot of 'Speed Cues', to give an idea of how fast you're going."



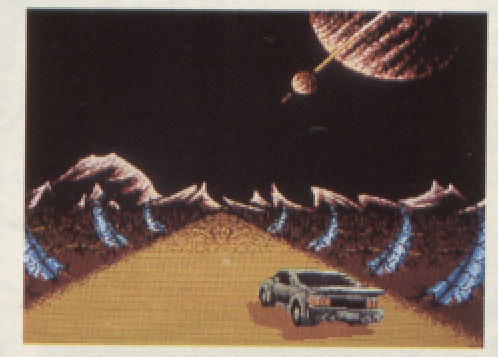
THE REASON for the two modes of transport is simple: the plane is best for terrains which are inaccessible to the car, whereas the car is perhaps able to sneak under the alien radar.

THE INTRODUCTORY sequence shows a space station in orbit around a planet. A dropship zooms out of the station and right at the screen to herald the start of the game. From here follow a mission briefing and hyperspace and touchdown sequences.

A GRAPHIC ACCOUNT

"I'm trying to get across a more moody time of game," Paul reveals. "Most of the graphics are different from normal driving games. There's no pictures of Marilyn Monroe or toucans. There's skeletons impaled on sticks, skulls with wings..." And there are other differences, as Richard Underhill is keen to point out: "We looked at all the driving games on the Amiga and, with the exception of **Stunt Car Racer** and **Super Hang-On**, they're too slow. We're trying to make good all the old Sega conversions, like OutRun and Galaxy Force. They're alright, but the Amiga isn't being used as it could or should be."

Arc's going to great lengths to do things properly. Paul's using a CAD package on the Amiga called **Sculpt 3D**. "I sat down and spent three hours or so creating the car or plane in 3D. Now all I do is look at it from different viewpoints, work out a nice distance and render it. For the loading screen, I turned the car round, set full 'Photo' mode and rendered it again." The 32 different directions help generate a feeling of solidity as the car jumps over hills and dips into troughs. This technique will be utilised in the future.



AS YOU drive or fly towards the centre planet of the system, the image of the big planet gets bigger on the horizon. On every fourth planet you fly down through a tunnel to its core, with a 3D nuclear reactor at the end of it. Another idea we're thinking of is you get to the end and screech to a halt. You go down a lift and down into the planet, then you have to shoot the hell out of this guardian.

SOUNDING OFF

Music is a different problem, although on the Amiga all the tunes – produced on popular tune toy **Soundtracker** – are ready already! Former in-house musician Chris Guard was given the 'mood' and he came up with the music – "Just like that," adds Paul. "He'd come in in the morning, sit down, put the headphones on, and at the end of the day he'd have a couple of tunes."

In a month Chris produced about 47 tunes, of which seven will find their way into the finished game. All have to be limited in size to fit into the 64K buffer Richard has set aside for music.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Arc's next project is already underway, with Richard working on new routines at home in his spare time. "Our next game is going to be totally different. A 3D arcade adventure, scrolling in every direction in real time, with lots of shooting and spell casting. It's another thing I want to do as it's never been done properly." Expect that one next year. And further into the future? "Ideally I'd like to write Restrictor for the Atari Lynx," he beams. Any takers?

PROJECT
Powermonger
PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts
AUTHOR
Bullfrog
Peter Molyneux (Design, Amiga & PC Programming)
Glenn Corpes (Graphics, ST Programming)
Simon Hunter (Graphics)
Charles Callet (Sound)

INITIATED
January '89
RELEASE
AMIGA
Late September
ATARI ST
Late September
IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
Late September

The Power And





WITH the real world theme, a lot depends on elements that are simply beyond your control – like the weather. Seasons change – it rains, it snows, and this has a direct effect on your performance. When snow covers the ground, farming becomes more difficult and less food is produced. To counter this, it might be worth investing in a few fishing villages early on, as fishing continues right through the year, regardless of the weather.

"Thanks to this new system, we're able to generate waterfalls, cliffs, valleys, mountains, proper towns, road networks, forests ... It's a real world!"

BULLFROG'S **Populous** is, without doubt, one of the most successful games ever. It has over 300,000 sales to its credit and more awards from the software industry (nine at the last count) than almost any other game. And now, nearly 18 months since its release, it's about to get a new lease of life in Japan with conversions to the Sega MegaDrive and Fujitsu FM Towns.

First mentioned in Issue Seven, and revealed in more detail in Issue Twelve, **Powermonger** is the latest from the Programmers Of The Year. In the nine months since that piece, the game's close to completion in the hands of Bullfrog's main man and co-designer of Populous, Peter Molyneux, who takes up the story...

"What we wanted to do after Populous is... well, we knew that we could get more – and better – games out of this sort of world view idea that we had developed. That's not to say that we wanted to do a Populous rip-off, but we wanted to have another game where you view the world by looking down on it, as we feel that format still has plenty of potential. But the problem with the Populous view, and indeed the way in which Populous is written as a whole, is that it's very restricted in terms of its mechanics – it's only made of blocks after all, so you can't produce any very varied shapes."

The team set about looking at more flexible ways of producing and presenting a landscape, and the idea of a vector-driven approach was soon hit upon – partly because ST programmer Glenn Corpes had been playing around with them for a while anyway. "The graphics system that we have developed for Powermonger is basically a mixture of vectors and bitmaps (sprites). If you want the full term it would be light-source-shaded filled vector polygons – it's not a million miles away from the graphics system used in **Midwinter**," Molyneux reveals. "What we've come up with is a trade-off. In Populous the graphics are very quick to generate, but the view is limited. In Powermonger, you have the opposite. Because polygons are used you have more freedom, but for the same reason it takes longer for the computer to draw them."

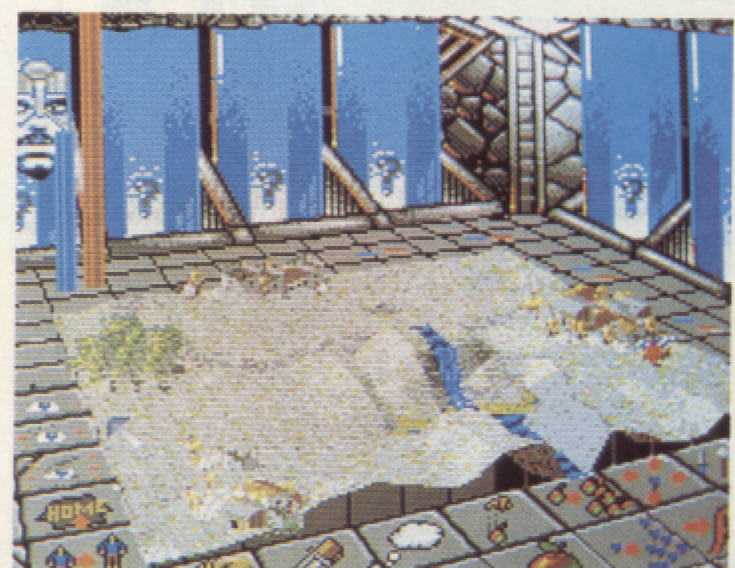
One major plus of polygons is that the landscapes are calculated rather than 'drawn', and so a lot of memory is saved. In Powermonger's case at least, this is essential – over 50% of the memory is taken up by game logic alone.

"I'm really pleased to see games coming out now, like Midwinter and **3D Tennis**, that use vectors for something other than flying a plane. We've tried to put them to a new use as well – vectors are so flexible, and you can get an incredible amount of detail out of them. In Populous we had hills, houses and rivers. Thanks to this new system, we're able to generate waterfalls, cliffs, valleys, mountains, proper towns, road networks, forests... It's a real world!"

Despite Populous overtones, Powermonger is really the first game of its type. If you had to pigeonhole it, you could call it a strategy-cum-wargame – although Molyneux isn't too happy about that: "When you try to pigeonhole something like Populous or Powermonger and say 'wargame', everybody immediately assumes it's all about moving tanks around, making one choice every game hour and pressing hundreds of keys, which is precisely the sort of game we didn't want. Yes, we wanted a game with strategy in it, but also a game that you didn't have to work it all out on paper first and so on. Powermonger is strategy-orientated, but it is NOT a wargame – it's a simulation of a kingdom."

Which brings us onto the game itself. The original specification hasn't changed a great deal during the 18 month development period. Obviously new features and gameplay elements have been added along the way, but the gist is much the same.

The player is cast as a renegade adventurer – a person who for whatever reason has been cast out from his own country and sent packing in a boat with a band of 20 followers. The game starts when you and your men land on the coast of a new, undiscovered world, and you decide to set up home there – with yourself



AT THIS early stage in the game, no Captains have been recruited – that's why the only face in the 'hall of mirrors' behind the landscape is your own. As captains are recruited, their ugly mugs are placed in the mirrors in order of rank from left to right. It's worth noting that each captain has a different personality, ranging from placid to downright psychotic. This emotional makeup is important, as it determines how a captain interprets your orders to him – and if he is not happy in his work, there's a chance that he may defect to another tribe.

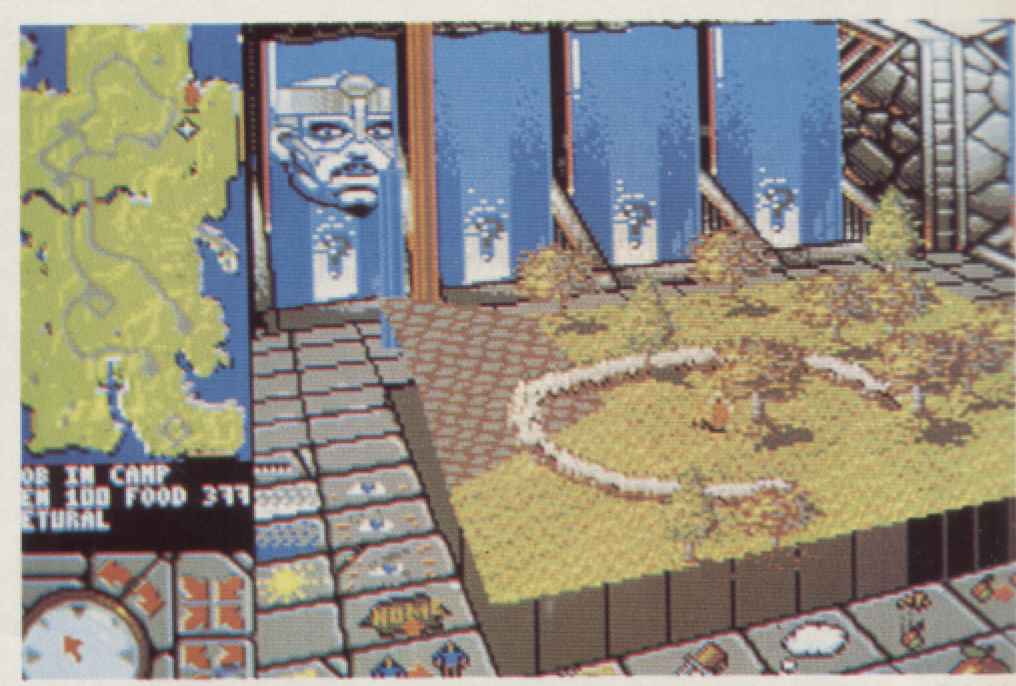




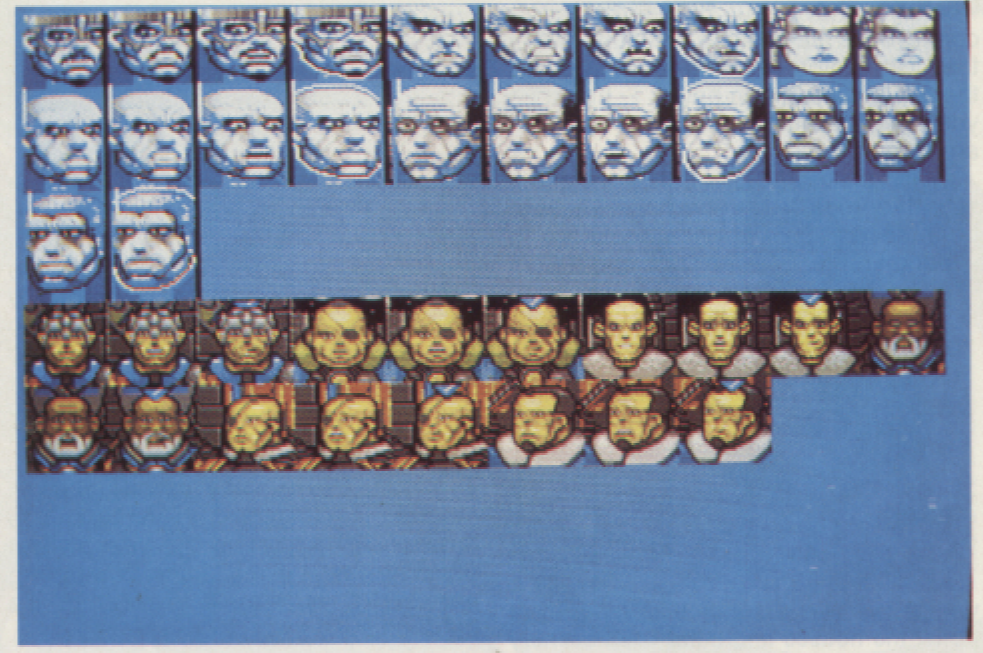


Just when Gary Whitta thought he had the whole of Populous' 128,000 worlds in his hands, Bullfrog comes up with another four thousand million to play with. And a new concept to boot.

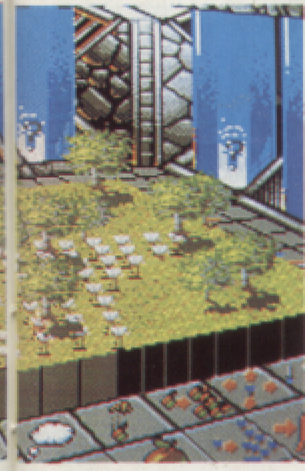
THE LEVEL of detail aside, the greatest boon when it comes to using vector graphics is their flexibility. The landscape in Populous was completely sprite-based, restricting it to just the one view. With Powermonger, due to the wonder of mathematics, the whole landscape can be tilted, rotated, expanded and shrunk, allowing any part to be seen from any angle and at any distance. And considering that a landscape can be built from up to an incredible 2096 polygons with a possible 100 sprites on screen, it moves at a remarkable pace.

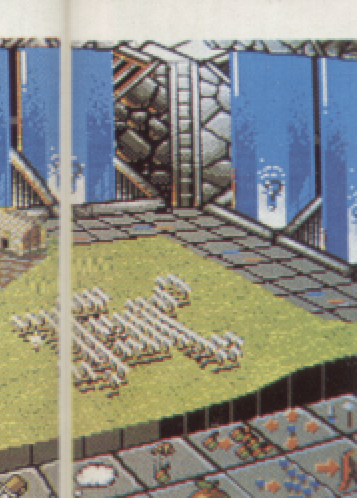


YOUR MEN don't just stand around waiting for an order – they make themselves comfortable. Here, for example, after a pretty hefty battle, your men have set up camp, and it won't be long before the marshmallow toasting fork comes out.



THE FIVE Captains at the top of the screen will appear in the finished game. Below them stand the rather weedier-looking ones who were scrapped to make room. Note the changing expressions, which will help determine how that Captain is currently faring.





WHEN your armies are on the march (above) or preparing for battle (below), they are ranked in file as a proper garrison should be – a feature that can be exploited to gain the upper hand in battles. Sticklers for realism should have a field say here as many of the formations have been copied directly from those throughout military history!

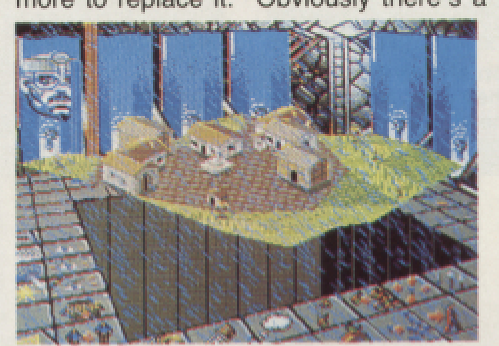
as ultimate ruler. Unfortunately the natives of this world aren't too sure about the idea of a new pecking order, and to make them come round to the idea, you may have to be – well, firm-handed to say the least.

Something that can't be stressed too much here is the concept of the real world. The team strongly believes that the more realistic the game environment, the more involved you become with it and subsequently the more fun you have. For this reason Bullfrog has gone to great pains to make everything in Powermonger as realistic as possible by creating worlds with a real social and economic infrastructure – right down to the people themselves. "Every inhabitant of every world in Powermonger has a name, a home and a job to do," Molyneux explains. "In Populous you just had people and that was that, but here there are farmers, fishermen, shepherds, merchants, cattle ranchers, thieves and so on, and this creates a 'real' society. The most important aspect is food – all the towns and villages produce it in one way or form, and this depends partly on where that village is based. A coastal town, for example, will have lots of fishing activity, while a village where there's lots of flat land would be a farm and hilly land would be a good place for a shepherd and so on."

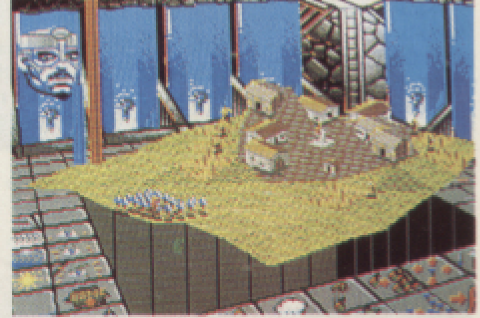
This is, more or less, where you come in. Your empire is expanded by conquering villages, and this in turn is achieved by beating in battle the occupants of that village. The village and the remaining population are then yours to command – they can go on producing food, or you can press-gang people into your army and so on.

But for every action there's a reaction. "Your villagers and your armies must have enough to eat, and if they don't they die out," Molyneux reveals. "Now if, for example, you press-gang hundreds of farmers into your army for a large attack, their villages are going to stop producing food and when you run out they'll be no more to replace it." Obviously there's a need for a careful balance if you are to expand your empire and stay alive at the same time – but that's not even half the story.

There's more than one megalomaniac on this world. Powermonger is a multi-player game that will eventually support up to four human players via a serial link (but not six as originally reported) and possibly even more computer-controlled opponents. Each powermonger is just like you – out to get everyone else and claim as much property as possible – and herein lies a whole world of strategy and



PERSUADE a village to perform more useful tasks than simply farming or attacking other villages by simply getting your Captain to make them invent something. These people aren't as stupid as they look, and it's a good bet that, given enough time, they can come up with something very handy. Once again, the surrounding terrain determines the outcome. A village can come up with anything from a mace to a plough – depending also on the level of the Captain's aggression.



REMEMBER the disorganised brawls that took place in Populous? Here, combat is organised with military precision, thanks to the Captains. Like the old Norman and Roundhead battles, the opposing forces get in file and face off before brutally murdering each other. While many factors influence the most important is perhaps the size of your army. Fortunately, reinforcements are at hand if a pasting looms.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Powermonger was, from the very beginning, called Warmonger (that was Project W in the Work In Progress in Issue Twelve). And indeed, up until quite recently, that's was the name intended for the packaging. Problems, however, arose when Electronic Arts decided that the name Warmonger would not sell too well in Germany (due to certain events some 50 years ago), and that the title could also be misconstrued in the USA as an out-and-out wargame. Since that name has been scrapped, a race has been on to title the game, and suggestions have come thick and fast – and most have been dropped...

EXODUS (Already Copyrighted)
OVERLORD (Already Copyrighted)
FOOD (Not Good)
RULING FORCE (Ditto)
RIGHT TO RULE (Ditto)
DOMINATOR (Already Copyrighted)
CONQUEROR (Already Copyrighted)

Powermonger was a compromise between Bullfrog and Electronic Arts. Bullfrog liked Warmonger too much to drop the title completely – and Electronic Arts didn't like the 'War' bit. Thus the remaining part of the word was meshed with something a little less risque to come up with Powermonger, which has the necessary 'hard' quality without the possibility of being deemed 'offensive'.

counter-strategy. The only way your success is assured in by ensuring the failure of others. Before long the situation escalates into an all-out war. Villages are attacked en masse, armies meet and clash – it's hell out there.

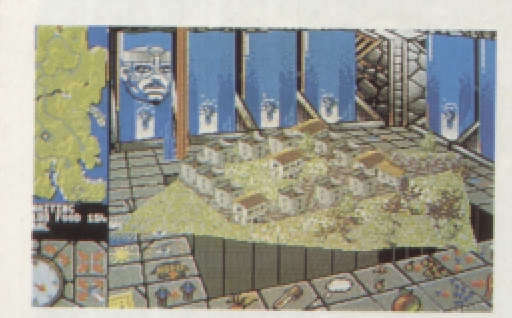
However, none of this all out death and destruction would be possible without the Captains – as Molyneux is quick to explain: "When you start the game the world you're out to conquer is occupied by five Captains – one for each of the five largest settlements on that world. Each Captain controls that village and its occupants, and when you defeat a Captain's village, he is immediately put under your control. The more Captains you control, the more you can do as you can have up to six armies on the move at once – even if you have a group of people under your command, you can't tell them to do anything unless you or one of your captains is with them."

Thus, a chain of command is created. You make a decision, pass it onto your Captain and he has his men carry it out. Problems arise in the multi-player game when you have four players vying for control of as many of the five Captains as they can before anyone else 'recruits' them. Captains mean power – the more you have, the more formidable a force you are.

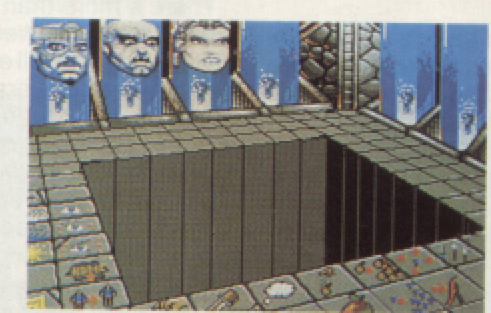
All this makes the logic behind the game sound very complex – your fingers have to be in several pies at once if you are to expand your empire AND defend it from the clutches of rival tribes. But complicated is a word that Peter is not keen on when describing the game.

"Powermonger's strength," Molyneux feels, "is while it has complex strategy elements, the game is designed so that a lot of the legwork is done for you, and all you have to do is make the necessary decisions. All the options and actions available are executed from one simple bank of icons, with no key-presses of pull-down menus to cope with. It may look over-complicated, but it's very similar to Populous in the respect that when you first see that you think it's all too much to think about, and yet within a couple of hours it becomes second nature, and that's all down to the simplicity of the execution.

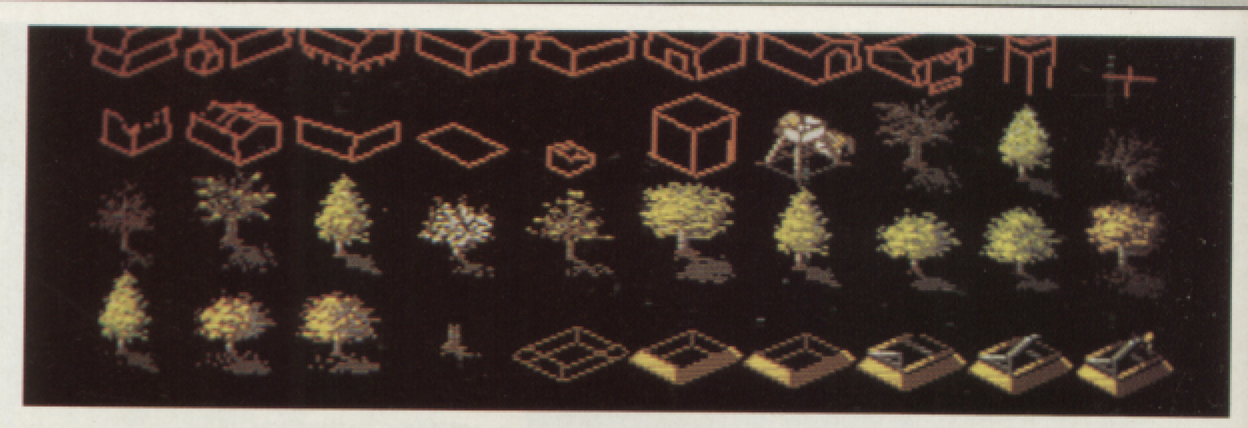
Powermonger is scheduled to be released in September, and if that date is to be hit, the team really needs to put its foot down – especially Peter, who, as designer, still has a few gameplay elements (such as sieging and spying) to work out. It's not yet decided how many preset worlds there will be to conquer (although the landscape program can generate approximately four thousand million, so that shouldn't be a problem!), and he's still not sure exactly what is required of you before you can be said to have won a kingdom and go on to the next one. With that, the mandatory bug-testing and the PC version still to program, it's uphill all the way...

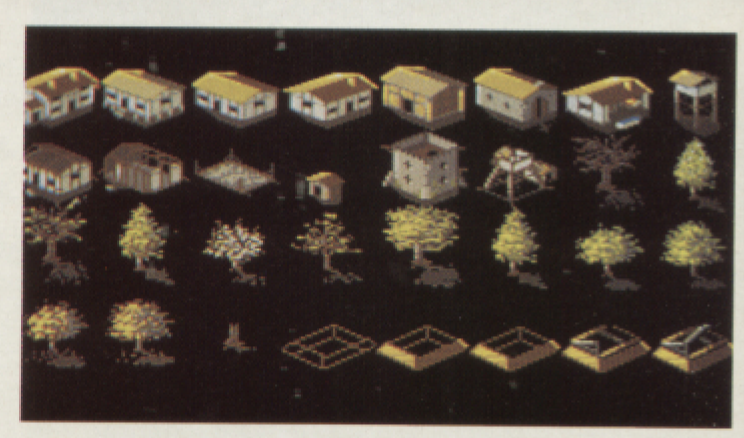


WHILE the vector-based landscape itself turns, the houses and other fixed scenery don't – and that's because they are drawn as two-dimensional sprites. It might sound strange to have the landscape rotating around the houses, but in practice it's not noticeable.



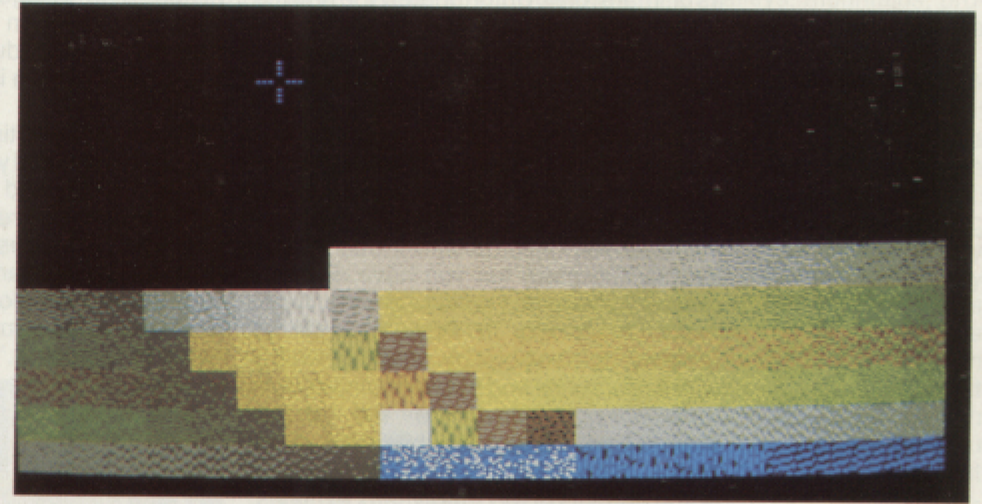
THIS WORKING screen shows three of the Captains installed in their alcoves and ready to go – now all they need is a landscape to conquer!





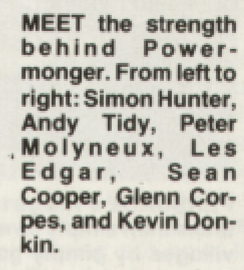


THE SPRITES, such as the people, houses and trees, were designed and drawn by Simon Hunter. He first got an idea of the general outline for each house (left) before touching them up to produce the finished article (centre). Unfortunately for Simon he's had to draw all these sprites in different sizes, so that they get bigger and smaller in relation to the landscape when it's zoomed in and out. The people (right) remain the same size no matter what the magnification.

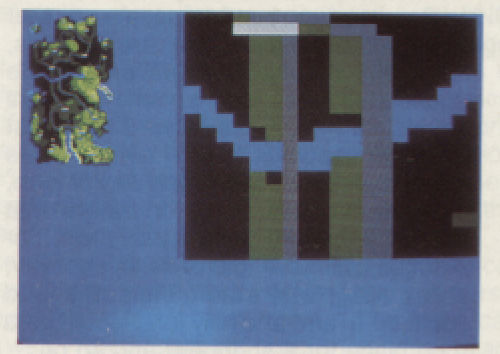


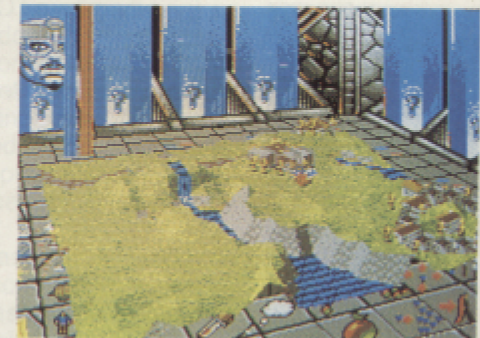
THE TERRAIN is entirely light-source shaded, with the artificial sun hanging constantly in the top-left hand corner of the screen. To produce the effect, this texture map was created, and a program written to place the relevant sections of terrain depending on the lie of the land.





MEET the strength behind Powermonger. From left to right: Simon Hunter, Andy Tidy, Peter Molyneux, Les Edgar, Sean Cooper, Glenn Corpes, and Kevin Donkin.





CREATING a land was child's play for Bullfrog. First, a 2D landscape similar to the overall map view that you see in the game is created on Deluxe Paint (left). Shades of green are used to determine contours – dark green is low land and light green is high land. In addition, the grey is a road and the blue is water. This 'map' is then fed into a program which takes the colour data and converts it into a real landscape (right).

PROJECT
Operation Harrier

PUBLISHER
US Gold

AUTHOR
Creative Materials
Paul Dunning (Programmer)
Lorne Campbell (Graphics)

INITIATED
November '89

RELEASE

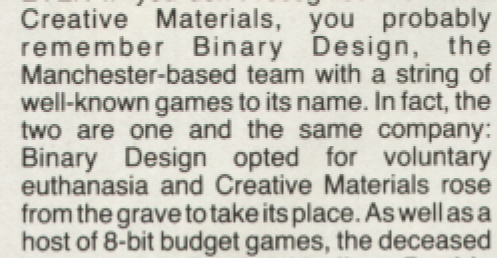
AMIGA
September

ATARI ST
September

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
September

Operation Harrier

What have Creative Materials, Rotoscape and a Harrier jump jet got in common? Gordon Houghton piloted his VTOL Metro to Manchester to find out.



EVEN IF you don't recognise the name Creative Materials, you probably remember Binary Design, the Manchester-based team with a string of well-known games to its name. In fact, the two are one and the same company: Binary Design opted for voluntary euthanasia and Creative Materials rose from the grave to take its place. As well as a host of 8-bit budget games, the deceased accrued a long list of 16-bit efforts: **Double Dragon** and **Double Dragon II**, **Aaargh!** (ST), **Bubble Ghost** (PC), **Feud**, **Hyper-bowl**, **Motorbike Madness**, **Sorceror Lord**, **Shinobi**, **Steve Davis Snooker**, **Roadwars**, **Sidewinder** and **Vectorball**.

The Mancunian company's administrative core is based around the trio of Andy Hieke, Nick Vincent and Patricia Dempsey. One of Hieke's previous lives saw him establish Terminal Software, who produced early classics such as **Lazy Jones** and **Super Skramble**. He also claims to be one of the few people ever to pay royalties to the music industry: Lazy Jones contained a version of 99 Red Balloons, for which "substantial fees" were negotiated.

Creative Materials' initial spawn was **ROTOX**, the first game to be developed using the Rotoscape system. Rotoscaping is a technique which allows a landscape to be scrolled and rotated around a sprite, rather than having the backgrounds scroll in linear fashion and animating the sprite through 16 directions.

Operation Harrier is planned as the second Rotoscape game – and it could well be the last. Nick Vincent, the Development Manager, explains why: "The technology is a couple of years old now. It's not as unique as it was."

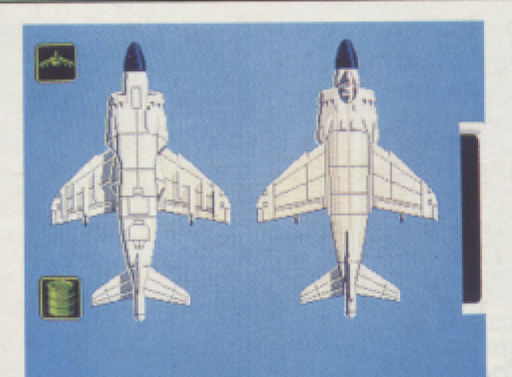
This system came to pass slowly. According to Vincent: "It just evolved. We saw some games at a coin-op show a couple of years ago – Namco's **Metal Hawk** was one of them – and they provided the basic inspiration. The point of the game was that the screen used bitmap rotation: they had a whole different feel compared to most of the other stuff we saw. We realised that you can't do that kind of bitmap scroll on 16-bit – except maybe on the Amiga – so we came up with vectors as a solution."

Operation Harrier uses an advanced version of the system: ROTOX had 16-step rotation, but this is a lot smoother: "You can zoom in and out as well – it's effectively as smooth as the resolution of the screen itself."

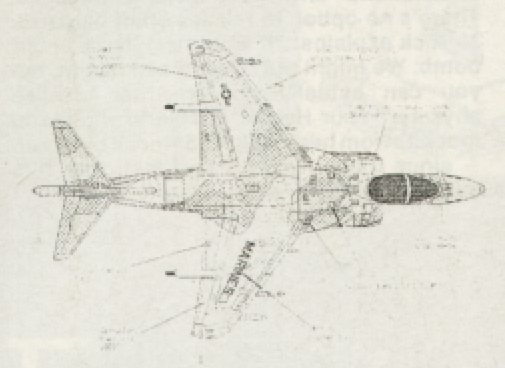
The coding spade-work is usually farmed out to external programmers and musicians, many of whom busy themselves at the company's Bristol office. One of these is Paul Dunning, the coder solely responsible for all three versions of Operation Harrier (his only previous 16-bit effort was the Shinobi conversion for Binary). He's been developing the ST and Amiga versions on the ST using **DevPac** (Creative Materials is wary of jumping into PDS-2). ST and Amiga Harriers are due first, followed by a PC version a little later: the release date is set to coincide with the PC Show.

Despite the relative tardiness of the PC version, Creative Materials claims to be PC games pioneers, as Nick Vincent points out: "We had some Virgin Mastertronic product at the PC Show in 1988; and both ROTOX and Operation Harrier have always been conceived as PC games."

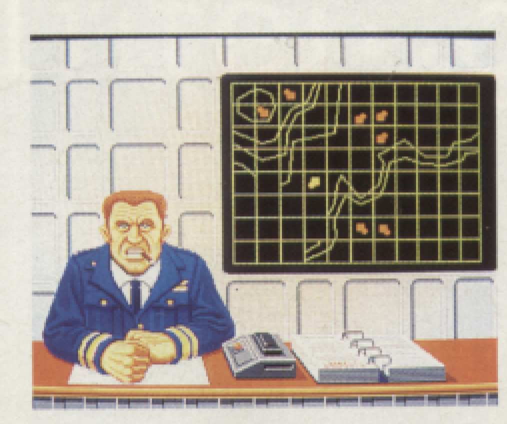
The graphics are being produced by Lorne Campbell, described by Vincent as "a publicity-shy relative newcomer." He used to work for Zippo '**Cosmic Pirate**' Games on an isometric platform game



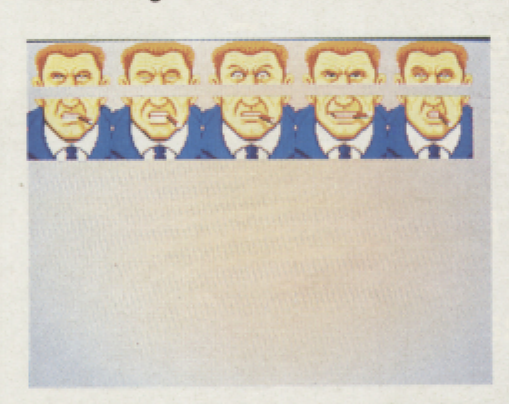
THE HARRIER 'jump jet' is the only truly successful fixed-wing VTOL aircraft. Built in Britain, it made its first flight in 1966. Its specifications include a single jet engine and a set of swivelling nozzles, which deflect the jet exhaust vertically downwards for take off and landing, and to the rear for normal flight. It refuels in mid-air. The team based their own Harrier design on the official McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II.



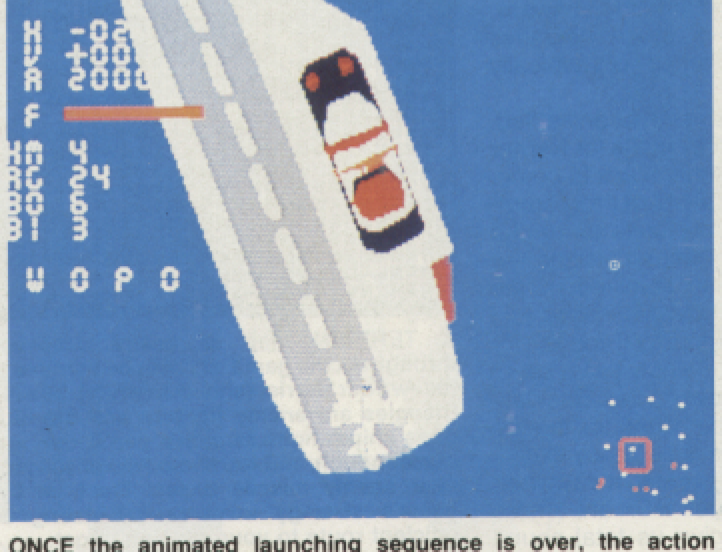
A COMPARISON of the two shows how faithful the representation is, though the computer-generated version above isn't the one used in Rotoscape, merely the one used on the weapons screen.



COLONEL Mad is an ever-present character, with a severe congenital facial twitch: he awards honours and details missions. All the still graphics screens were designed by Lorne Campbell: at the moment, the game uses the top half of a 1040 ST's memory as a RAM disk, so it doesn't have to load in these screens, a feature that should also be present on upgraded Amigas. The alternatives for smaller machines are either a scaled down version with fewer still graphics or a 'graphics' option which would include all the screens but would also mean some hefty multiloading.



LIKE everyone else in the game, Colonel Mad is a man of many parts. These animation frames reveal the wide range of expressions you encounter in conversation with him.

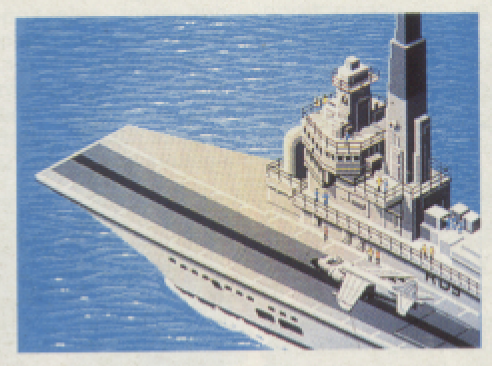


ONCE the animated launching sequence is over, the action switches to Rotoscape proper. This allows you to zoom in and out of the screen (thus changing the altitude) by holding down the fire button and pushing forwards or pulling back. The display shown here is an old version: the new one has a more comprehensive information panel detailing the score, altitude, artificial horizon, fuel gauges, compass, the number of weapons you have and a short-range radar.



THE TWO faces of Creative Materials: dressed in extravagant Persil-white summer clothes and straw boaters are Nick Vincent (Development Manager, who likes to describe himself, fundamentally, as "despising the Manchester music scene"), Patricia Dempsey (Director) and Andy Hieke (Managing Director). Photographed outside the company's Manchester office-cum-large house is bashful Bristol-based programmer, Paul Dunning.





ROTOX had one, and so does Operation Harrier, which isn't surprising since Creative Materials "love animated sequences". The pre-game Harrier launch sequence features a bird's eye view of the aircraft being readied on the deck...



FOLLOWED by a more intimate farewell.



(provisionally called **Hex**). He's also "done some work" on Nintendo software, about which there is much secretive whispering and murmuring, but typically no names.

In game-sound hasn't yet been settled, though there are sketchy plans for Harrier engine effects with plenty more to come. Vincent is philosophical about programming FX: "We often do the effects and sound in-house. I've found most musicians are never keen on getting involved in the sound effects side of things – they just want to write a piece of music. If you ask for sound effects you grudgingly get a set of zaps and **Space Invader** noises. Besides, with the sampling techniques for the ST and Amiga these days it's so easy to do it yourself. "He looks forward to a day when sound cards for the PC are more widespread: "It will give us total sound compatibility across all formats."

Strangely enough, ideas aren't usually worked out on paper first – ROTOX and Harrier had a proper design specification "only because US Gold wanted one." And it's evolving all the time, as Nick Vincent observes: "It isn't practical to specify games precisely – game design is about compromises and new ideas."

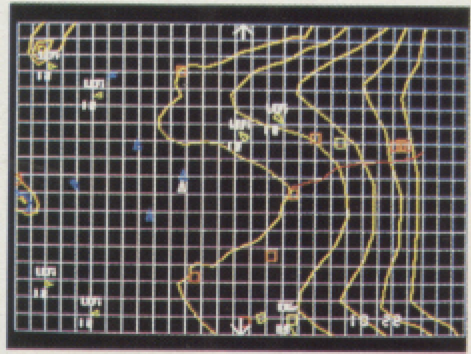
So what made them decide on a Harrier game? Obviously, the Rotoscape system's ability to zoom in and out is an ideal medium for a jet with VTOL (Vertical Take-Off and Landing) capabilities. Despite this fundamental similarity, the Mancunians have resisted the temptation to go for a serious macho bells and whistles flight simulation: it's too tongue-in-cheek for that.

There's no current storyline – "we don't want to stir any political controversy" – but, basically, you pilot a Harrier jump jet and fulfill missions. There are squadrons of enemy planes flying about, airfields, nuclear plants, missile bases and other ships, but completing an assignment simply involves flying from A to B and executing mission orders such as bombing the specified target. This would be fine but for the two-pronged opposition of limited fuel and aircraft damage.

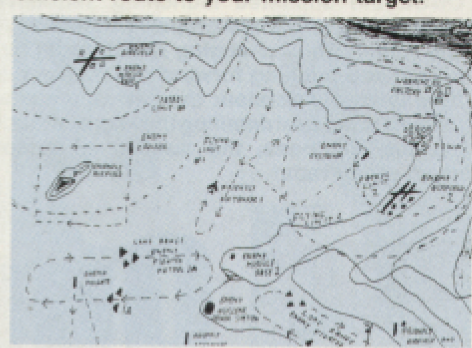
Vincent isn't a fan of conventional level-based shoot 'em ups – "**R-Type** clones have been done to death" – so Harrier was deliberately designed as an unconventional blaster. "It's more flexible than an arcade game, because you don't have to kill a certain number of aliens to finish a level: if you're smart you can dodge whole sections. It's a learning process."

Even though they don't see much long-term hope for Rotoscape in its present form, Creative Materials recognises potential logical developments of it, such as sprites embedded in the 3D landscape – an advanced version of the systems used in Millennium's **Resolution 101** and Accolade's **Gunboat**, for example. "The problem with current vector games is that you sacrifice the speed you find in bitmap games for freedom of movement: what you gain in flexibility, you lose in detail." They see the ultimate future differently, however: they are currently working on Nintendo software and have plans to convert Sega Megadrive games. "We can envisage roads to other consoles in a couple of years' time, too," adds Nick.

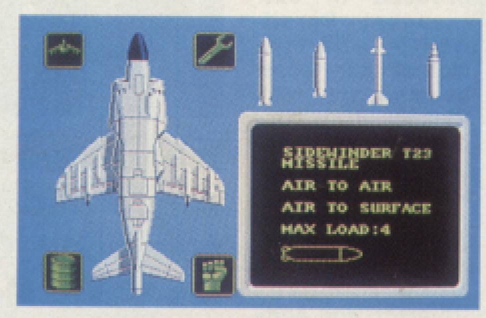
The immediate future holds a film conversion for Mindscape: described as "a kind of **Top Gun 2** with cars" – it's called **Days Of Thunder** and is due to open this summer, starring Tom Cruise. The game itself is almost finished, but isn't due for release until early autumn.



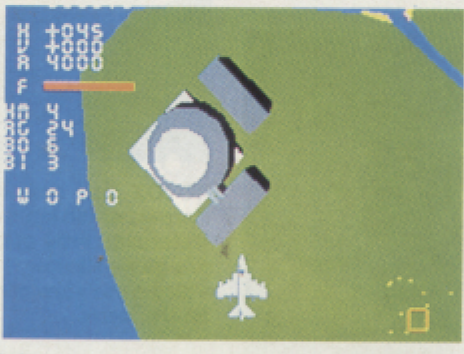
A TERRAIN map is easily accessed throughout the game, and can be scrolled to follow your Harrier (shown in white). The red triangles are enemy fighters and the blue ones ships: fighters chase you if they get close enough, and you should never stray too near enemy missile bases. Much of the game's strategy involves calculating an efficient route to your mission target.



THE PLAYING area was originally designed on paper and hasn't changed much from this design. There's a limit to how far you can fly, because the whole terrain is surrounded by an imaginary, impassable range of mountains.



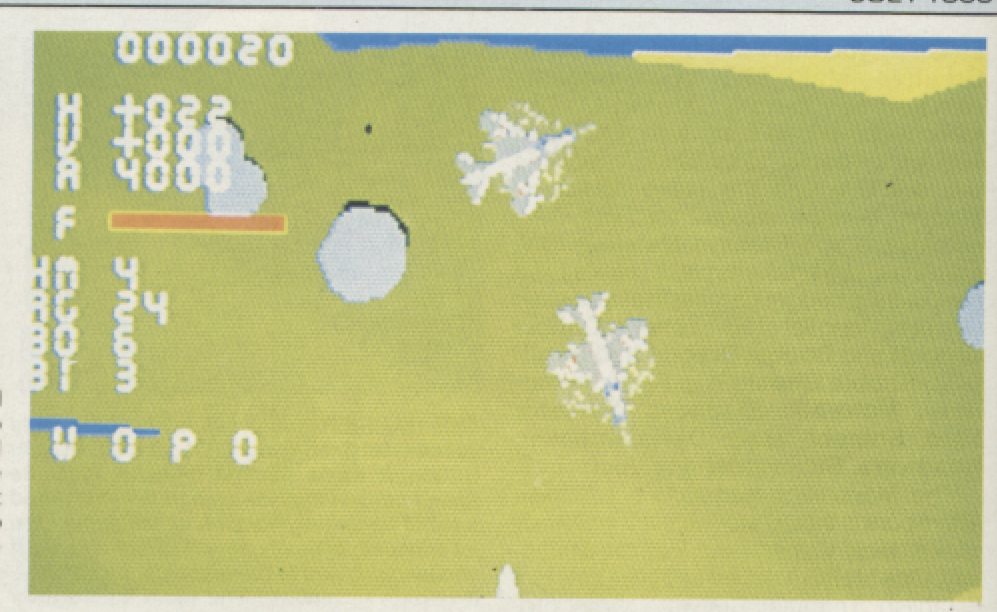
WEAPON selection is a simple matter of pressing a function key as you fly – armament selections are made on the weapons screen before you take off. As well as arming the Harrier, here you can also load a saved game, return to briefing, repair the Harrier, launch and refuel it. Weapons include 1000lb bombs, 500lb bombs, heat seekers and rocket launchers.



YOU are advised not to carry out improper actions, such as blowing up your own carrier. Even so, this is infinitely preferable to dropping a bomb on the nuclear power plant...

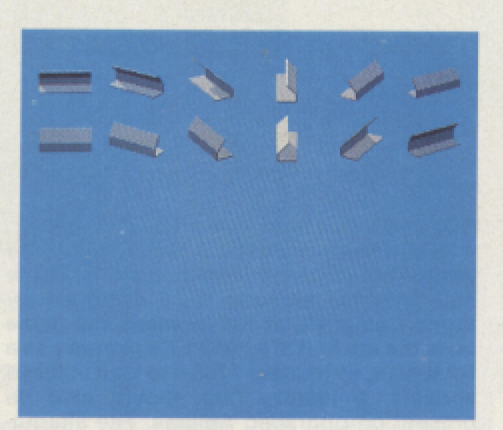
SINCE a nuclear plant doesn't respond kindly to aggression.





ENEMIES include other planes, helicopters, installations and heat-seeking missiles. There's no option to release chaff because, as Nick explains: "It would act like a smart bomb. We might put a few token bits in, but you can actually out-turn the missiles anyway." Your Harrier is able to withstand four hits from heat seekers before it blows up – since these fly thick and fast, four hits doesn't give you long.

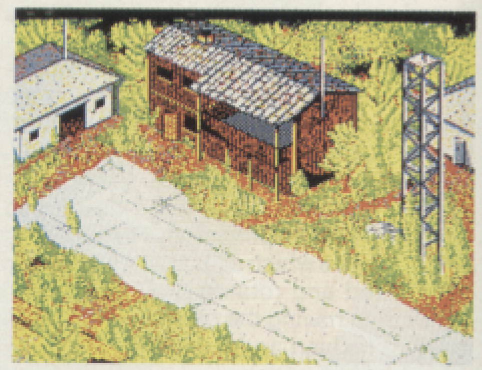




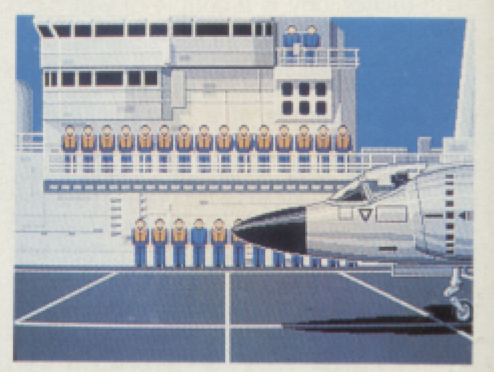
MANY of the ground bases will feature animation to add that extra touch of realism. This is part of a radar which notifies the enemy of your position – bomb first and ask questions later.



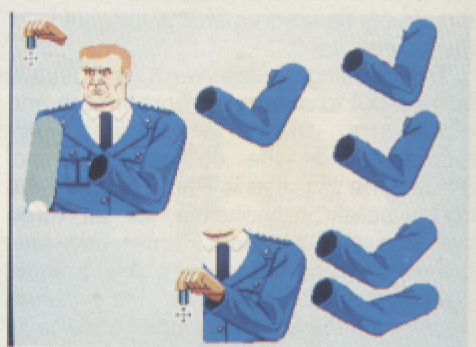
FLY too far inland and you crash on high ground (the colours grow paler the higher the terrain). Fly too low over the sea and the result is similarly catastrophic.



THE CARRIER isn't the only place where you can refuel or repair the aircraft: landing on the island gives you 50% repairs, whilst extra fuel is gained from four air tankers dotted around the map.



OPERATION Harrier includes a full post-mission promotion-cum-recrimination system complete with medals and awards ceremonies. To construct it, just take a ready-made background...



ADD some frames of animation for Colonel Mad...



AND complete the picture with your pilot.

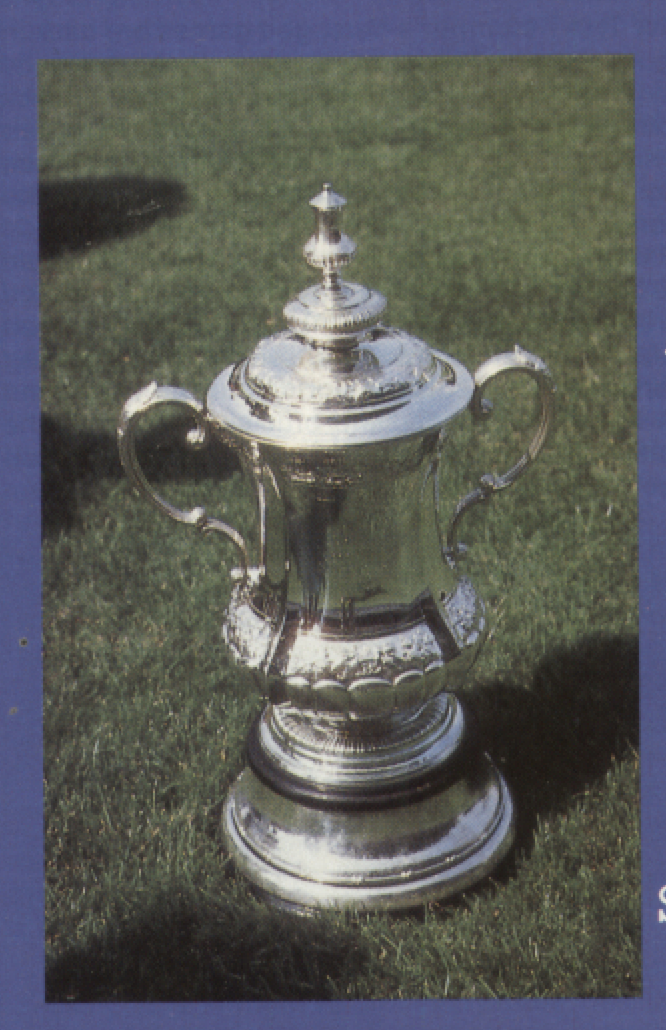


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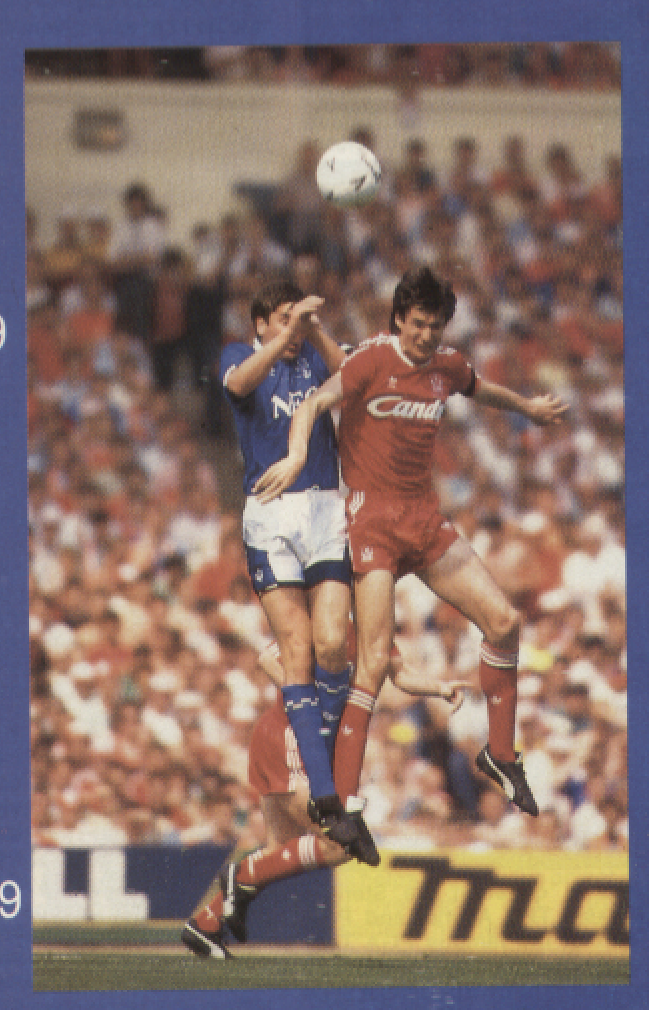
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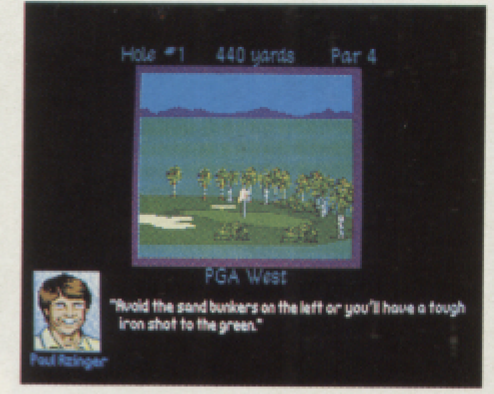


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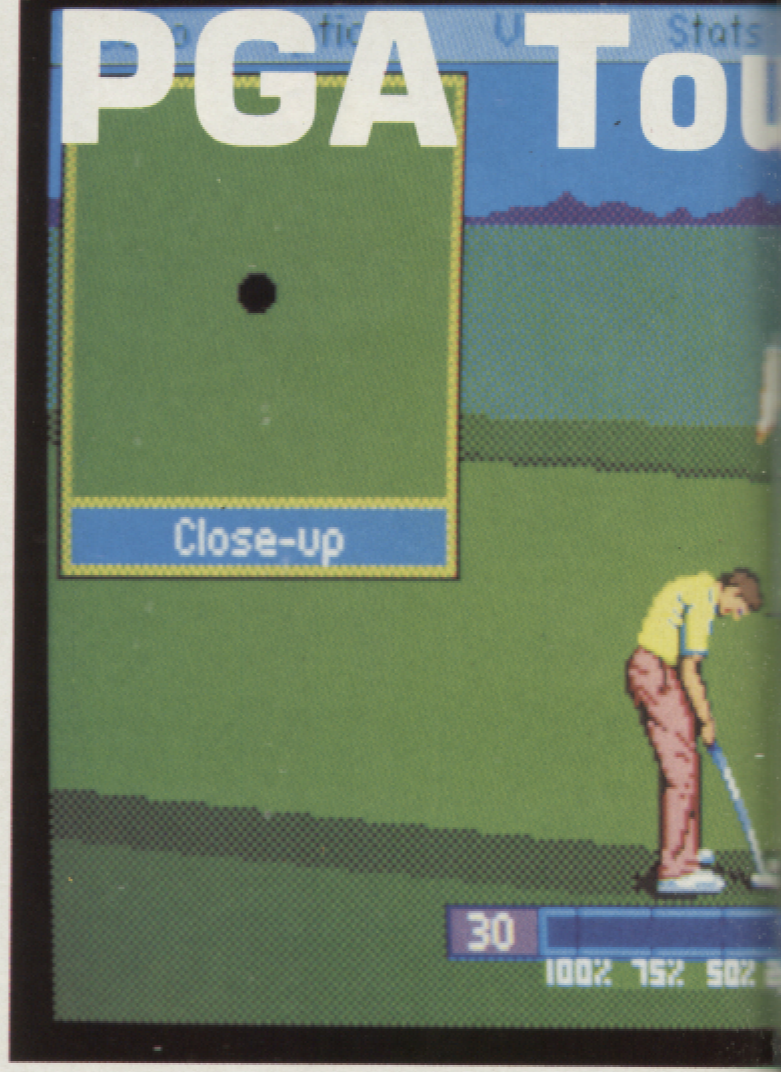
"The designers have obviously thought long and hard about this, and have managed to strike an excellent balance between game and simulation."



THE PRO SHOP is where all would-be Olazabals come at the start of the day, and it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with all the options available here before committing yourself to the course. A comprehensive range of clubs is available (although you can only select 14 to play with – your caddy's not Lou Ferrigno, you know), as is the option to play either a practice round or tournament. Any combination of up to four computer or human-controlled golfers can play over any of four famous US courses...



PROVIDING your PC's processor is up to the job, each hole is preceded by an impressive aerial camera fly-by that starts from behind the pin (that's the hole to a golfing layman) and carries on panning down the fairway to the tee, giving a handy three-dimensional preview of what's to come. As an added aid, certain courses come complete with tips from PGA pros such as Craig Stadler (well he's not exactly Ballesteros, but he's better at golf than most, so pay attention).



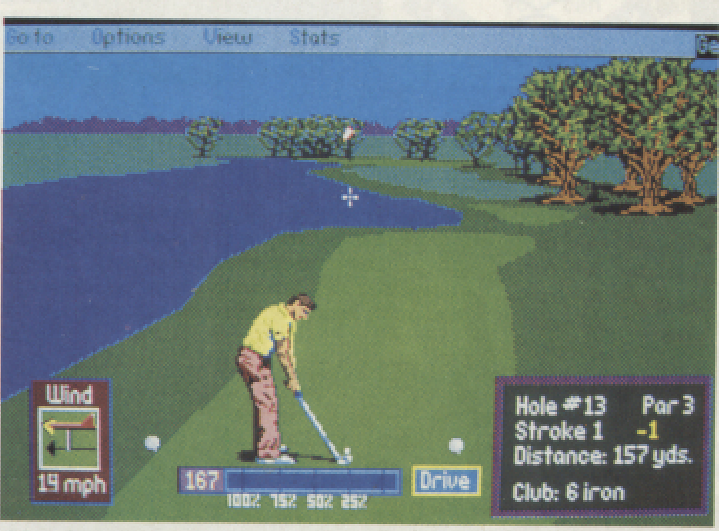




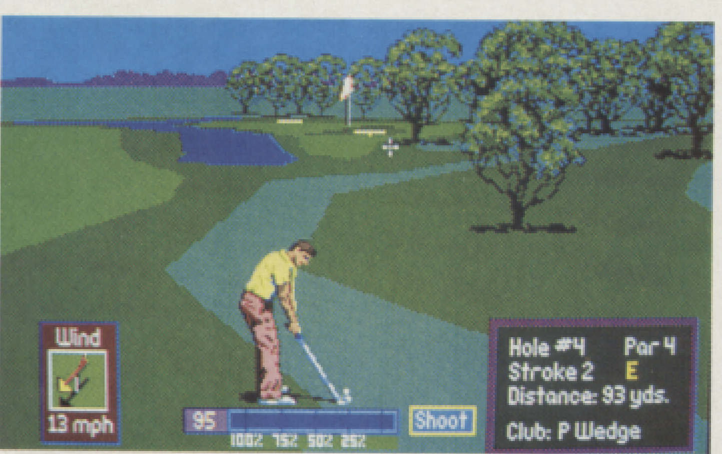




THE COURSES in question are Sterling Shores, Sawgrass, TPC Avenel and PGA West, each part of the famous PGA Tour itself. All are about the same in difficulty terms, but each poses its own particular style of problem – Sterling Shores for example is riddled with treacherous lakes and other water hazards.



FOLLOWING the aerial preview and a quick look at an overhead map of the hole, it's time to tee off. As with all the shots you play, the computerised caddy automatically equips you with what it deems to be the best club for the shot. The distance to the pin and the lie of the ball are also given. Change these three variables at your peril.



PLAYING a stroke couldn't be easier. Once a club is selected and a rough direction for the ball is determined (with the help of a horizontally-moving cursor), the shot begins. The first mouse click starts the backswing (and the shot power bar rising) and the second determines the shot's power as a percentage. A third and final click must then be executed with pinpoint accuracy to stop any hook or slice affecting the ball's flight. The shot is then played. That's all there is to it. Well, almost...

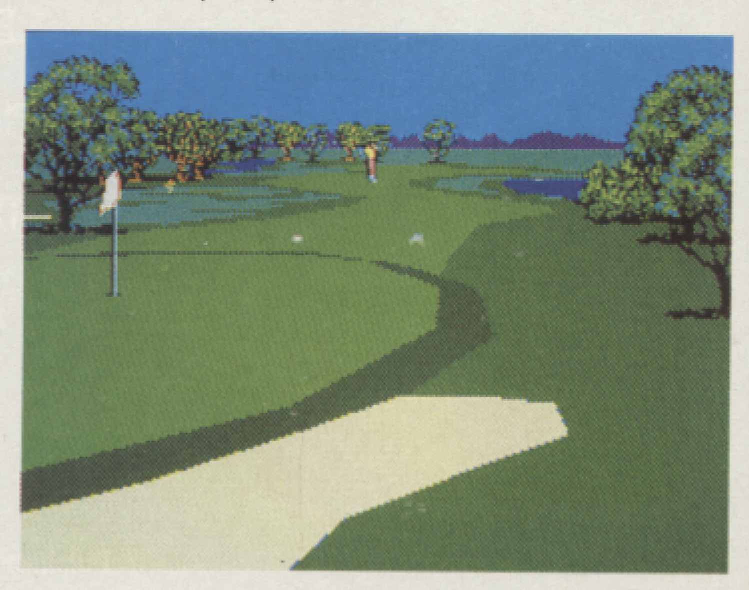


A SECOND or so after you strike the ball, the camera view snaps to the other end of the course looking back at you, to give a better view of the ball's flight and its eventual landing. It's similar to television golf coverage, where the cameraman desperately tries to keep the ball in shot all the way through its flight, but here the camera stays still. Because the ball always lands near the camera, you get a much better view of how it landed than you would with a golfer's-eye view. An indicator showing the length in yards of your shot is then displayed and it's onto the next.

Is there life after Leaderboard? Promising more than any golf game's offered before, American developer Sterling Silver Software thinks so – and so does the PGA. Gary Whitta goes clubbing.

NOW THAT summer's here, golf games are back in vogue – and none more so than those officially endorsed by a top golfing professional. Good ol' Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman have already lent their monikers to two of them, and it probably won't be long before the likes of Olazabal and even the legendary Ballesteros himself get in on the act.

But while the latest entry in the race to the 19th hole also bears a golfing licence, this time round there's a novel twist. Instead of linking up with a golf professional, Electronic Arts' second 16-bit golfing effort (after the mediocre **World Tour Golf**) has gone one better and gained the official blessing of the sport's largest governing body, the Professional Golf Association (PGA).





PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	93%
VALUE	89%

OVERALL

92%

AMIGA
TBA

ATARI ST
TBA

PC Where **PGA Tour Golf** scores over other golfing games and simulations is its gameplay. It's perfectly balanced so that while there's a good deal of accuracy and depth, it's simple enough to pick up and learn within minutes. Placing and playing your shots is, if anything, even simpler than in **Leaderboard** (formerly the best example of a golf game as opposed to a simulation) and because all the information you need is presented clearly and without fuss, you can play as advanced a game as you like without having to mess about with complicated menus and icons. The designers have obviously thought long and hard about this, and have managed to strike an excellent balance between game and simulation. Icing on the cake comes in the form of near-flawless presentation, with the exquisite pre-hole flyby, tips from the professionals and the alternating camera angles. The facility to save out career statistics is invaluable, as it proves a genuine aid in rooting out your weakest areas. Unfortunately it's an experience only to be fully appreciated by those with a speedy PC, as without this and the Roland or AdLib music, PGA Tour Golf isn't quite the same – but even then it's the best golf game there is. And we can't say fairway-er than that!

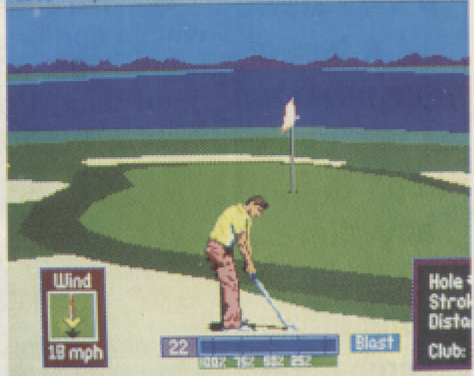
A Plans do exist for a Commodore version, but it's early days yet and so details are very scarce – a release date hasn't yet been set, and while it should turn out to be very similar to the IBM original, it's not yet been decided what tweaks and changed will be made. One thing though is certain – you won't see anything for at least six months.



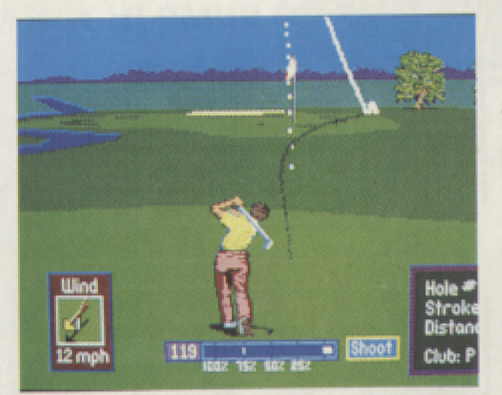
Atari PGA Tour Golf is on the cards, but like the Amiga version very little has been decided as yet. Expect to see something nearer the end of the year.

ON THE GREEN it's a whole new ball game. Wind is no longer a factor, but the lie of the land is. Any golfer worth his salt will tell you that greens are anything but flat, and on professional courses many have torturous slopes, hills and bumps that can affect your shot severely and so must be played around. That's certainly the case here, and so to aid putting, a 3D contoured representation of the green is displayed, showing exactly how the green lies. Memorise as much as you can, as no detail on the green is shown when you actually putt. Putting irons ranging from five feet to over a hundred are available, and again the strength of the shot is an important factor. You may be able to curve the ball round all the hills and valleys, but what use is it if it stops short or jumps over the hole?

WIND is a vital factor that must be monitored carefully. Blowing at anything up to 21 mph, it can send a ball wildly off course, no matter how perfect the shot may have been. Your only hope is to alter the placement of your shot beforehand, allowing for the direction and the strength of the wind. Experienced golfers may actually use this to their advantage, as it can help curve the ball around nasty dog-legs. Playing against the elements is not easy at the best of times, but the wind can (and often does) change direction violently at the last minute, things can get very rough (ho ho).



THE FAIRWAY is understandably the best place to leave the ball. But all too often the wind or simply an ill-played shot can send you into less helpful terrain. There are two types of rough – light and heavy – that enclose the fairway and the green, with the latter variety on the outside. Fortunately landing in the rough isn't too disastrous (unless you land right in front of a tree), but you may have to play a shorter club to get out safely. Bunkers, too, aren't so bad – the worst thing about them is that they stop the ball dead, thus losing any valuable distance from the bounce. The real killer is the water. If the ball gets wet it's deemed lost, and the shot must be either replayed or a ball drop taken – both options cost you a shot.



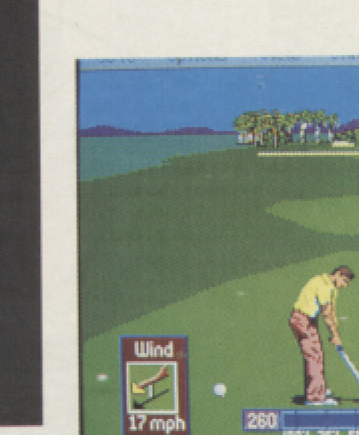
SHOTS that the computer deems to be spectacular – for example a drive over 300 yards or a shot that lands within inches of the hole – are automatically replayed. It's a useful tool for improving your game, as the flight of the ball is shown by a broken white line.

Welcome to The Kemper Open at TPC Avenel

Total prize money is $825,000

Prepare to begin Round 1

WITH a few practice rounds under your belt it's time to try your hand at the real competitive stuff. This is where the Tournament comes in. The basic game remains the same, but this time your opponents are computerised versions of up to 62 PGA professionals playing over three 18-hole rounds. You don't play against them directly – they go round separately and you never actually see them play, but you do see the results, and it's their scores that you have to compete against if you want to stay on the leaderboard. Depending on your finishing position (if indeed you finish at all), cash prizes are on offer, and your total tournament prize money is an important entry in your overall statistics.



AN INDICATOR next to the power bar shows the club in question's maximum distance. This helps to grade the power of your shots. If you ever need that extra distance, it's possible to hit the ball with more than 100 per cent power. But beware – if you do, any mistake made in the hook or slice department is greatly exaggerated and you could find yourself digging your way out of the rough for the rest of the day.

SORCEROR'S APPRENTICE
Actual Screenshots

AMIGA

PRICE	£19.95
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	74%
PLAYABILITY	79%
VALUE	83%

OVERALL 79%

ATARI ST
N/A

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
N/A

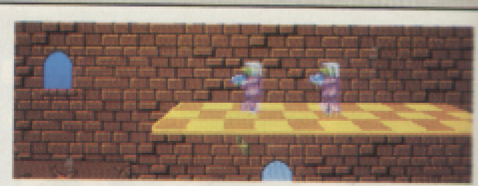
Sorceror's Apprentice

Gordon Houghton is spellbound with Actual Screenshots magical shoot 'em up.

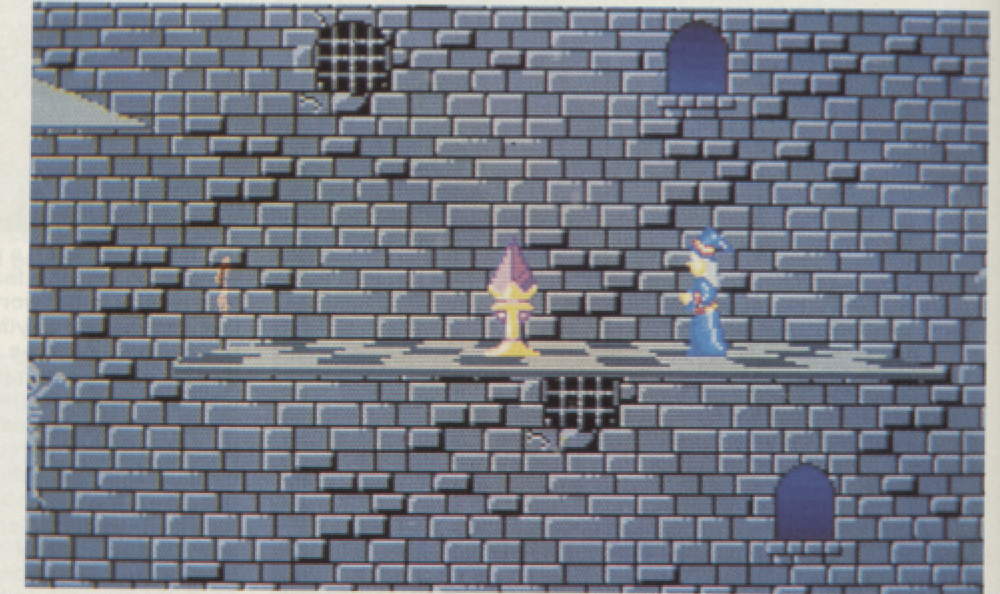
THE UBIQUITOUS forces of darkness have invaded the land and started doing evil things – pulling people's teeth out without anesthetic, stealing teddy bears from children and eating grandmothers. The king, who has a bad leg – otherwise he'd do it himself – has entrusted you with the job of eliminating this scourge.

The bad guys are living in the king's many castles, which comprise a series of eight-way scrolling rooms. They turned all the floors into ledges, so it's a good thing that you have the power of wingless flight. Making ghoul pie out of these demons couldn't be easier – a flick of the wrist unleashes a magical weapon that sends them screaming back to spook city.

"It's as stern a test of your reflexes as you could hope to find anywhere... a compelling, enjoyable, no-frills blaster."



HOLDING down the firebutton transforms your flying sorceror into an invincible insect – but only for a limited time. You initially have three such potions, with extra ones gleaned from leaping frogs: kill them and collect the phials of invulnerability left behind. Note the cute 'Tinkerbell' trail the insect leaves in its wake.



THE OBJECTIVE of every level is to destroy the purple crystal by pumping it full of the required number of blue orbs. A neat effect is achieved by shooting the orb off in the opposite direction to the crystal – the orb arcs back round with a 'whoosh'. With destructive task fulfilled, the crystal turns blue and you are whisked away to the next room.

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

ORDINARY zombies spring up from the ledges and walk mindlessly from one end to the other. The reward for this target practice is 150 points.

THE UGLIEST monster in the game, the red goblin also has the most spectacular death sequence: magic sends its head flying backwards in a shower of blood for 200 points.

DISSOLVE these quick-footed persons of restricted growth for 200 points.

SLIGHTLY larger than their more common cousins, these spiteful old men rapidly pace the ledges and bump into you at every opportunity. Reward for removal: 200 points.

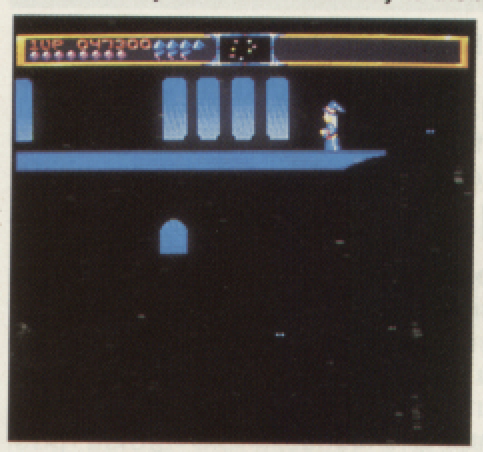
SOME dragons get fed up of chasing you through the air and land on a ledge to get a better aim – kill one for 200 points.

THESE appear more regularly the further you progress. Materialising out of thin air, they home in on you and fire pellets of doom. Their worth is 250 points.

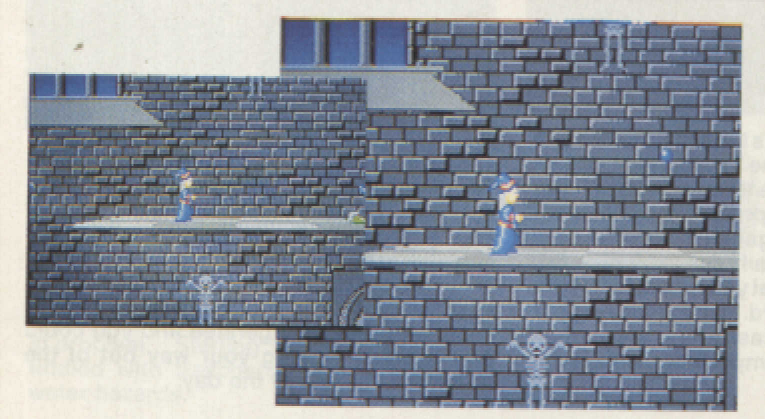
FLEET of foot and extremely annoyed, these hooded horrors stalk the ledges spewing out deadly pellets until they are killed – for a generous 350 points.

MERLIN behaves like a dragon but moves more swiftly and more intelligently. Dispatch him with some macho manual magic for 300 points.

DON'T kiss this leaping slimy amphibian unless it's the kiss of death. Destroying it rewards you with phials of extra invulnerability and a miserly 50 points.



NOT ALL levels have light to guide you: occasionally you are plunged into near total darkness, with only the ledges and monsters in view. It's easy to get killed here – but by now you should have amassed the 10,000 points you need for an extra life.



THERE are 10 types of enemy, the most popular of which are the zombies. These undead minions ooze from the ledges with monotonous regularity – they sometimes appear from beneath your feet, so you can't afford to be sluggish. Occasionally, a zombie materialises carrying a blue orb...

ONCE you kill it, the orb is thrown into the air where it hangs for a few seconds. Collect it quick – should you let the orb fall it's lost forever. You can fly around holding any number of orbs but it's wiser to return to the purple crystal and dispatch them as soon as you can – if you meet your demise with orbs in your possession, you have to collect them all again.

A Sorceror's Apprentice is a very unusual shoot 'em up – a combination of the speed of **Defender** and the platform action of **Joust**. And like those two classics, the graphics here are simplistic but functional, and the spot effects meaty and memorable. The first half dozen levels are fairly easy as long as you don't fly around recklessly – the ghouls and ghosts aren't too hostile and only move slowly. From then on, it's as stern a test of your reflexes as you could hope to find anywhere. Plagues of dragons speed about the screen, Merlin the magician homes in on you, zombies appear from nowhere when you least want them, and fewer blue orbs appear. It's simple, addictive action with only a couple of drawbacks: there's little variety in the backgrounds (otherwise the graphics are very pretty with a striking parallax 3D ledge effect), and there's even less variety in the gameplay – once you learn how to handle the enemies and cope with the increasing speed the action stays the same throughout. For all that it's a compelling, enjoyable, no-frills blaster – and for the price it's well worth a look.



No version planned.

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS
Virgin Games

ATARI ST

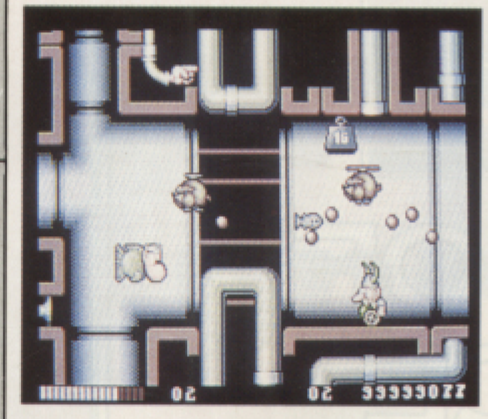
PRICE	19.99
OUT	September
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	86%
VALUE	82%

OVERALL 85%

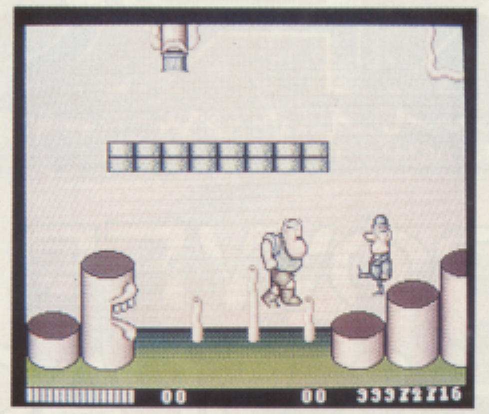
AMIGA

PRICE	19.99
OUT	September

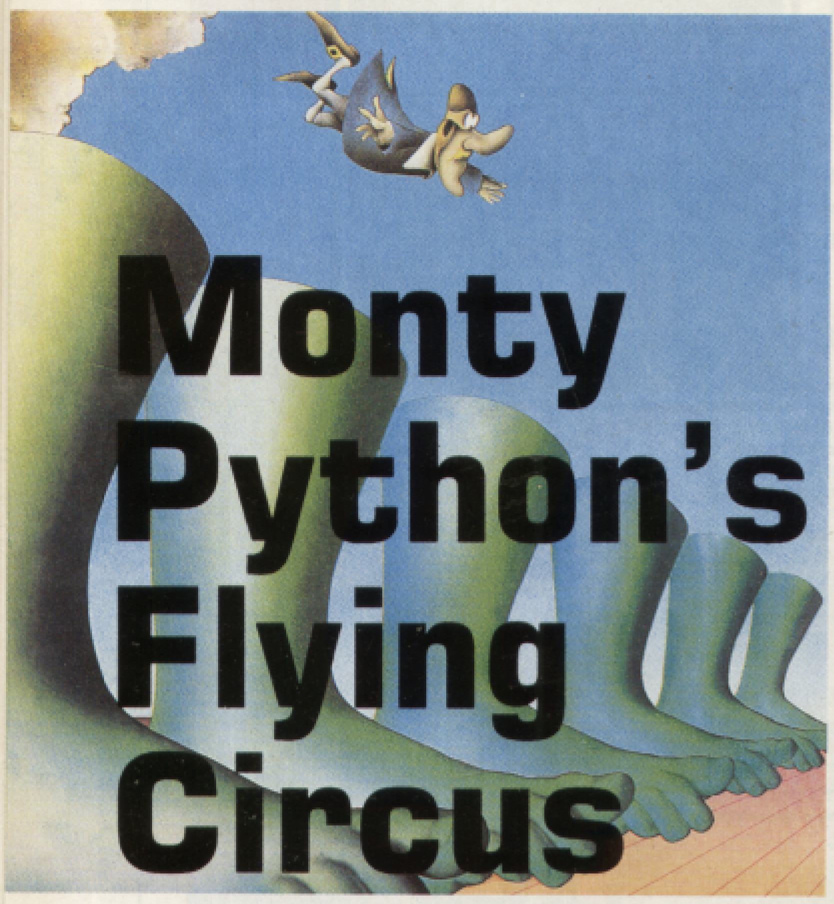
IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
TBA



EVERY adversary encountered comes from the TV series. There's a shower of dead parrots, exploding cats, Vikings on wheels, silly walkers – even the Spanish Inquisition throwing soft cushions! Most of their movement patterns are predictable enough, which means a well-thrown fish usually does the job. Killing some of the larger characters often yields rewards in the form of energy-boosting food or Spam.

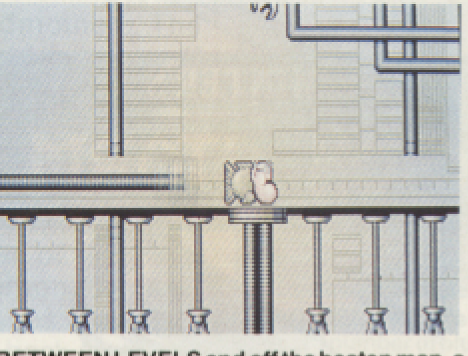


TO HELP him negotiate the horizontally scrolling underwater horrors of the first level, Gumby's body is replaced with a fish's. On Level Two however, his torso's in more familiar shape as he has to hop, skip and jump his way through a platforms-and-ladders world. The landscape is built from parts of the body, which is why mouths and toes are liable to attack.

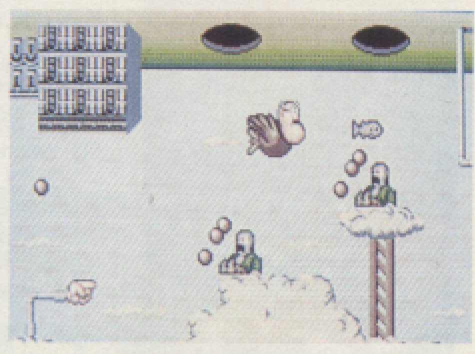


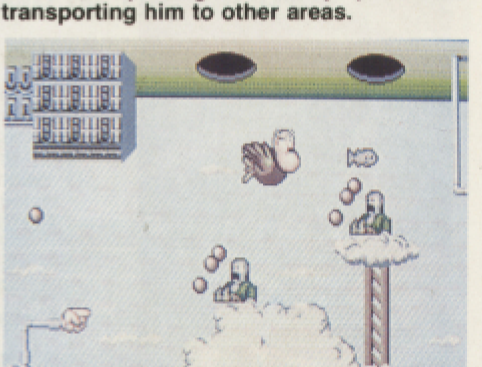
Monty Python's Flying Circus

"One of the unlikeliest licences of recent times has, surprisingly, yielded one of the most successful adaptations."

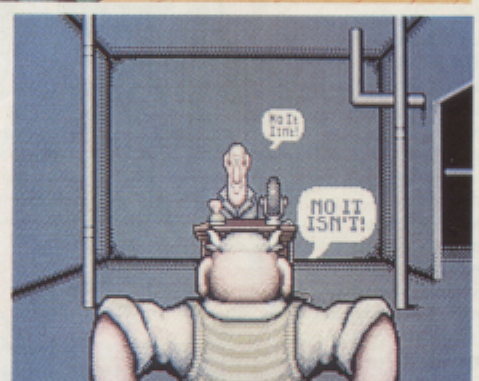


BETWEEN LEVELS and off the beaten map, a series of mechanical pushers, pullers and crushers manipulate Gumby, shunting him around, replacing his body parts and transporting him to other areas.





GUMBY'S body is replaced once more for Level Three, where he's a bird up in the clouds. The feel is similar to the first level, only now there's more to deal with... such as aggressive angels and exploding grannies (!). There's plenty of Spam out there to be found, too – if you survive long enough.



A BONUS round based on Python's classic argument sketch awaits at the end of a level. It's a reaction test in which you disagree as quickly as possible with the desk-bound John Cleese-a-like by selecting the appropriate contradictory response (complete with speech sampled from the series). The longer you last, the bigger the bonus. Gumby then walks into another room to regurgitate everything eaten during play, with a running commentary sampled from the Spam sketch.

THERE ARE plenty of puzzle elements and hidden bonuses to keep the avid Spam-collector busy. Switches in the walls trigger traps and release useful objects, while invisible bonuses in unlikely places wait to be shot and revealed. Not forgetting the secret bonus levels, like this one, where Gumby's head is placed on a spring. The idea is to bounce on the cheese blocks (which then disappear) and collect as many items as possible before being thrown back into play.

How To Recognise Different Types Of Writers From Quite A Long Way Away. Number Two: Gary Whitta. Gary Whitta.

STOP THAT! It's silly! No it isn't! Yes it is... Monty Python's Flying Circus, arguably the mother of almost every form of alternative comedy, makes its computer debut. But will it have the same effect as its illustrious television counterpart?

Rather than produce a game based on the names behind the series, developer Core Design has combined key elements of some of the more well-known sketches in an off-the-wall run 'n' jump 'n' shoot romp. The star of this show is Gumby, and his big adventure begins when, for no adequately explored reason, a large mechanical hand appears and opens up the top of his head. Four pieces of his brain are then removed and promptly bounce off the screen. From here on it's action all the way as our brainless hero tries to get back his bits.

Four levels of horizontally scrolling antics stand between the Gumby and success. Armed with an unlimited supply of fish to throw, his prime objective is the collection of Spam, tins of which are revealed by shooting certain adversaries or the slightly less abundant blocks of cheese. Some tins of the pink stuff, however, are just lying around waiting to be collected and so present no problem to the keen eye. A piece of brain is given in exchange for 16 or more tins of Spam once a level is completed.

WHEN Gumby runs out of energy, he's humanely squashed by the famous Monty Python foot (which is used to bring the show's opening sequence to an abrupt end). Incidentally, Gilliam borrowed the foot from a painting by the 16th Century painter Angelo Bonzino – and here's the picture to prove it.



ST One of the unlikeliest licences of recent times has, surprisingly, yielded one of the most successful adaptations. The balance between Python-humour and entertaining gameplay is commendable. So too is the fact that the spirit of Python has been captured so well – mainly through the accurate portrayal of Gilliam's characters, but also thanks to the sound, much of which was sampled directly from the series. Most impressive of all though, Core has also managed to produce a playable game to boot! The four levels are large and varied enough to ensure interest is sustained, especially with the many secret rooms and bonuses to be found. All in all, one of the tastiest slices of alternative arcade action since Venezuelan Beaver Cheese.

A Commodore Python is, to all intent and purposes, identical to the Atari version. And that includes the price and release date.



PC At present, no definite plans exist for an IBM-compatible incarnation of Python. However, providing the ST and Amiga versions perform well (and there's no reason why they shouldn't), MS-DOSsers could well see something before the year is out.



THEME PARK MYSTERY
ImageWorks

AMIGA

PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	75%
VALUE	81%

OVERALL 80%

ATARI ST

PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Now

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
TBA

"Slick presentation, sinister graphics and atmospheric sound combine to create an excellent, highly unusual package that anyone with a penchant for platforms and puzzles should definitely enjoy."

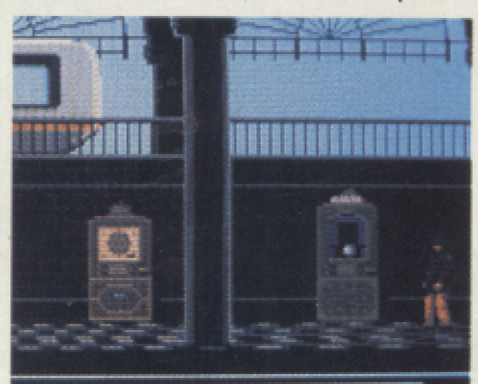
Theme Park My

Thanks to ImageWorks, Kati Hamza enjoys all the fun of the fair – and its more bizarre and sinister side, too.

THE MAGIC Canyon Theme Park is deserted. Rust eats away at the bumper cars, dust is inch-thick on the helter skelter and nobody sneaks into the love tunnel any more. The machinery used to work like clockwork – now everything's ground to a halt.

Whatever's happened here – and it can't have been pretty considering it frightened away all the staff – your intuition tells you it's got something to do with the four theme worlds on the monorail: Dreamland, Dragonland, Futureland and Yesterdayland. Your uncle began to unravel the secret before an inkling of the awful truth drove him to madness and suicide. The unsealing of the will confirmed what you'd most dreaded – the park and its mystery are yours...

And those are all the clues you get. With no more instructions than a summary keycard, all you have to sustain you on your fantastic journey is your wit, your charm and your intellect. This is a thoroughbred mystery: you don't just have to solve the puzzle, you also have to work out exactly how to play the game.

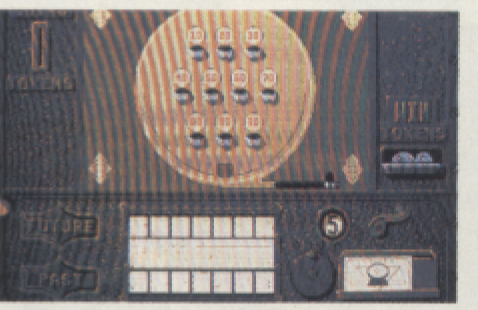


YOUR starting point is the monorail platform, Yesterdayland. The three arcade machines are in perfect working order but if you prefer to take a ride you need a ticket – and you forgot to bring your photocard.

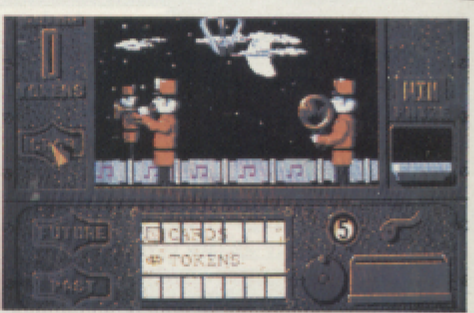
A If Sherlock Holmes had had an Amiga he would have played **Theme Park Mystery**: it calls upon all your powers of deduction, and like Moriarty it's very, very tough. At first glance it doesn't look like anything more than a glorified platform game, but a little experimentation with Yesterdayland's arcade machines reveals that there's a lot more to it than that. The fortune teller's hints, the mysterious objects in Dragonland and the bizarre contradictions of Dreamworld throw up a baffling series of puzzles that require plenty of stamina to solve. Slick presentation, sinister graphics and atmospheric sound combine to create an excellent, highly unusual package that anyone with a penchant for platforms and puzzles should definitely enjoy. Its only fault is the high level of initial difficulty – ultimately it may just prove a tad too inaccessible for the more impatient gamesplayer to persevere.

ST Clue for clue, the ST version is an almost exact replica of the Amiga version – right down to the graphics and sound.

PC The best things in life are worth waiting for and Theme Park's no exception. ImageWorks assures us that there will probably be a conversion, but the biggest mystery so far is for how much and when.



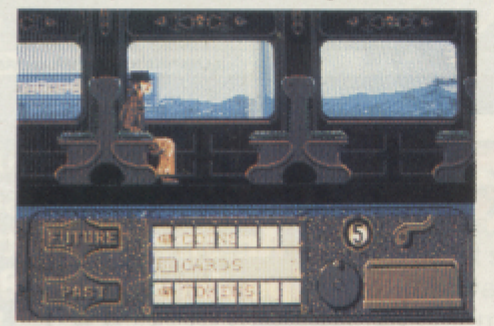
THE BAGATELLE swallows tokens and coins – score one hundred or over and you win a token reward. Why not spend it on having your fortune told?



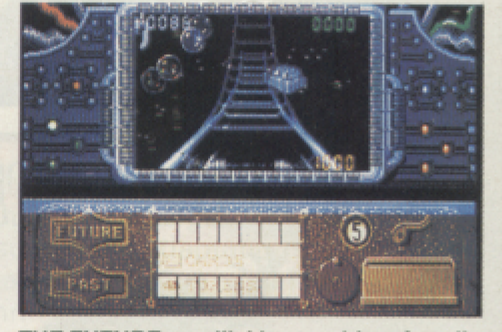
JUST like the real thing, the grabber is notoriously difficult to work. Fortunately there's plenty of time to perfect your technique – you don't need to win to get off to a good start.



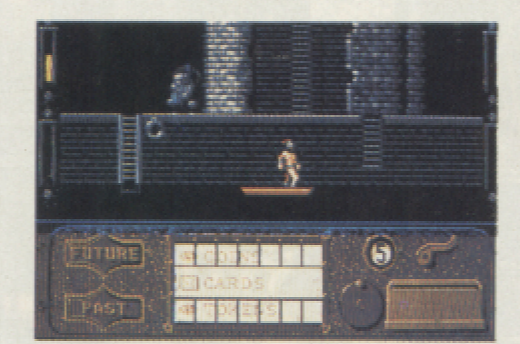
CROSS this guru's palm with silver several times and he spits out a monorail ticket, options to buy extra lives and a limited number of hints. You even get the chance to make a wish – instant teleportation to one of the other lands. Predictions come cheap at a token a time but coins (you get one by pressing the reject button) won't work. What you need are tokens – and they only come from the bagatelle.



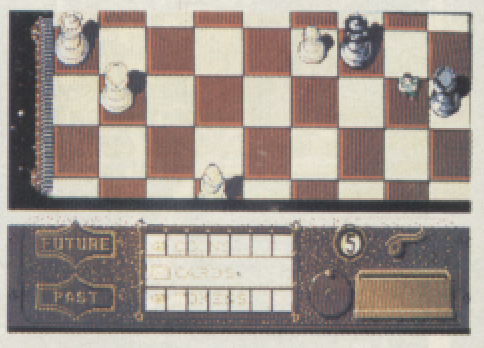
TAKING the monorail ride is a refreshingly magic experience. As if by magic you are kitted out with the appropriate costume for your destination.



THE FUTURE: a rollicking rumbler of a roller coaster ride, perched on the edge of a void. As missiles come hurling towards you there's just one weapon between you and the elements. Too many collisions make the ride too dangerous and force you to stop.



FIRST stop: Dragonland. It may look like a tunnel of love but in reality it's a living hell. Flames shoot out of the wall, stone golems hurl huge boulders and birds attack from the air. All you have to do is stay alive long enough to climb ladders, leap into boats, work out what all the mysterious objects are for and connect them with the fortune teller's clues. Next stop: Futureland...



BIZARRE, weird, out of this world. If you feel disorientated, that's the idea, because this is what your dreams look like. Some objects are collectable and one of the fortune teller's cards allows you to pick the length of your own dream time. However, the significance of this world of floating eyeballs, headless snowmen, gaping floors and marauding lips is for you to find out.

ystery

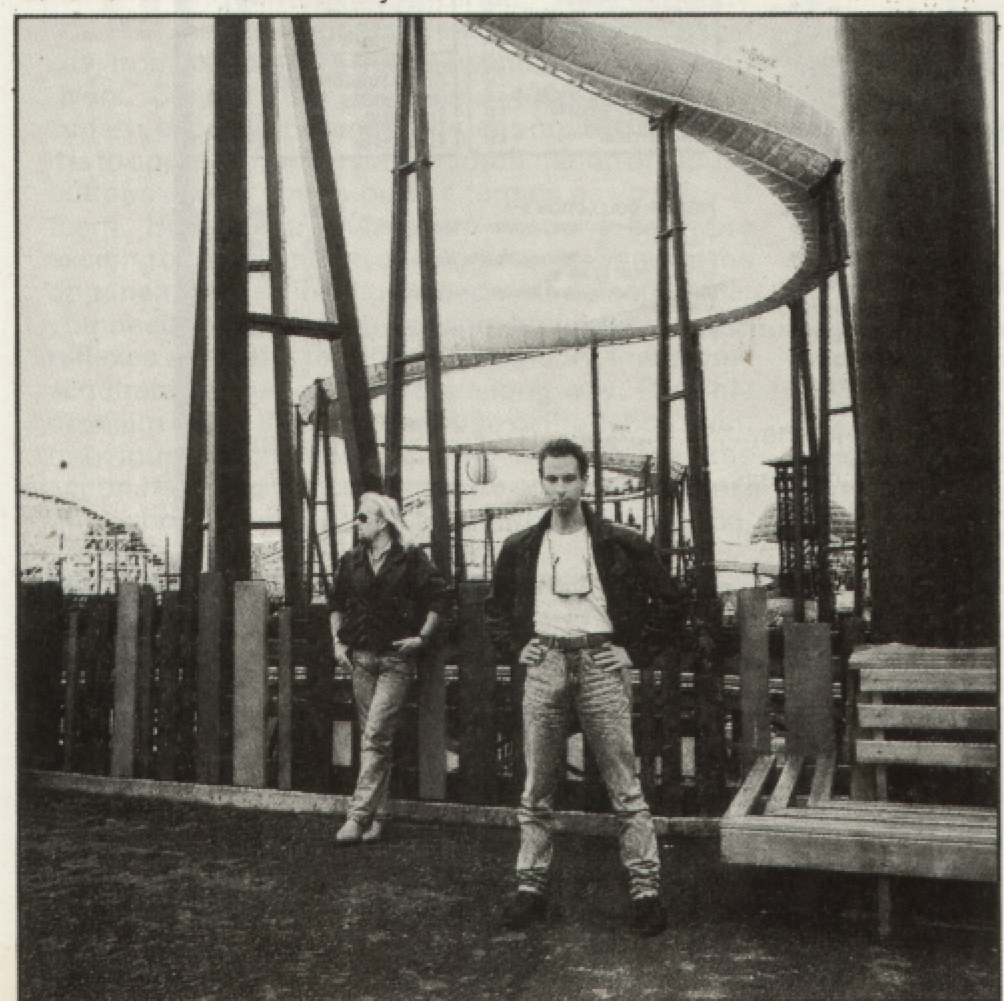
ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

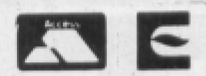
THE MODERN theme park has only one aim: to turn all the money in your pocket into food in your stomach, and then shake it all about. It's a tradition which has its origins as far back as Roman times when normally serious citizens forgot about their Latin verbs, let their togas down and indulged in the wild celebration – singing, dancing, eating dormice – that characterised pagan festivals like the Saturnalia. In Britain, fairs date back to medieval times: on regular 'wakes' days patrons gathered around the markets to be entertained by sideshows.

Early fairs were often closely linked with the seasonal business of the community. November, a time when employers traditionally sought servants and hired hands, became the month for hiring fairs. Around Christmas, when prudent families were accustomed to trade their livestock, goose fairs were held regularly.

Travelling fairs didn't come into the picture until as late as the 18th Century – mainly because the quality of the roads wasn't good enough. As communications improved the mobile shows got bigger and by the 19th Century the travelling fair had reached its peak. The ferris wheel, the carousel and the helter skelter were frequent features of the larger fairground sites. They stood side by side with the human freakshows: until the middle of the century it was commonplace to put bearded ladies, Siamese twins – anyone with a suitably horrific genetic deficiency – on show.

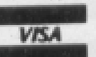
The first modern style theme park, a natural progression from fixed amusement parks popular at seaside resorts like Blackpool and Yarmouth, was opened on 18 July in 1955. They called it Disneyland. From then on the trend was to produce a vast mass-cultural pleasure experience, something altogether bigger, better and a lot more sophisticated than a plain series of stomach-churning rides. the cosmetics might have altered but the intrinsic purpose of the fair has never changed. The big theme parks – Disney World, Fantasialand, Alton Towers – are aimed at exactly the same thing as medieval bear-baiting or a Victorian What The Butler Saw machines: spectacle, entertainment and money.











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Pausing briefly to admire the super-smooth 3D, Gordon Houghton hops into his ground skimmer and tackles Millennium's answer to future crime.

IN 2038 the US Government is facing a hopeless situation. In a desperate attempt to check soaring crime rates the Senate has passed Resolution 101, which gives convicted criminals the chance to earn their freedom by tracking down and terminating high profile villains and gangland bosses.

As one of these convicts, your mission is to seek and destroy four drug running criminals who are operating in each of the city's quadrants. At your disposal is a Theta 4000 ground skimmer with light machine gun, plus a little insurance to provide you with a couple more craft in case of 'accidents'.

Wiping out each leader's craft three times effectively terminates his operation – so 12 successful kills provides the key to liberty.



SOME of the henchmen are transporting drug canisters. Only when you collect enough canisters to provide evidence against the drug runner can you defeat him with firepower. For every standard criminal you terminate a bounty proportional to his status is given.

RESOLUTION 101
Millennium

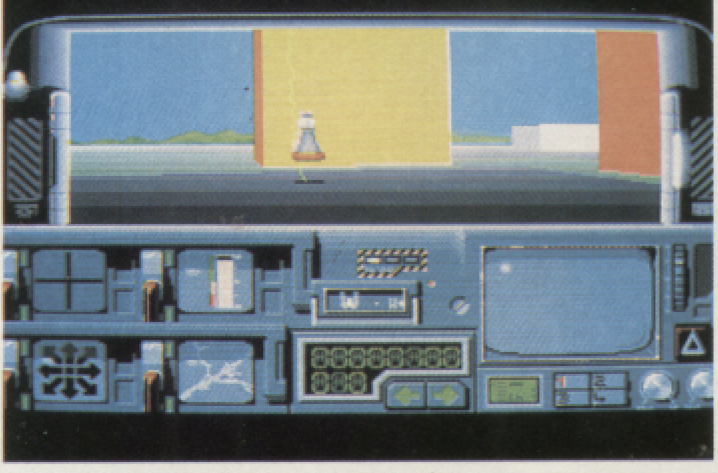
ATARI ST	
PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	76%
PLAYABILITY	82%
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OVERALL 80%

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Resolution 101

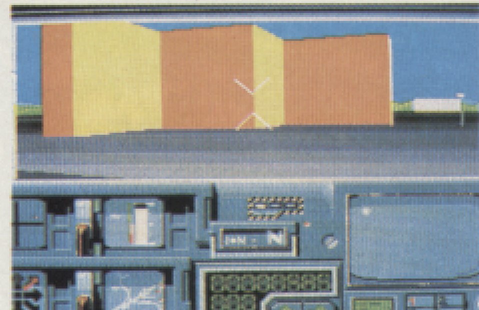


A FLASH of lightning is always bad news, since it heralds the arrival of the drug runner's minions. These vary from the pretty stupid target practice types to highly intelligent gang bosses, who plot complex strategies and guard their chief at all costs.

ST The graphical achievements of this game are beyond doubt: slick 3D polygon movement combined with equally smooth sprites create a very believable city, from skyscrapers right down to lamp-posts and rivers. Control over the Theta 4000 skimmer is superb, because the landscape is as rapid to rotate as it is to approach, and a simple combination of mouse buttons allows you to pursue targets as you fire at them. High-speed chases are made even more exciting by the game's tactical elements. Some of the opponents are so intelligent and well-defended that you need to combine a strategic brain with trigger reflexes and hefty firepower – armoury that's only acquirable once you progress a long way. The only problem is that there isn't enough of the action: with only four city quadrants sharing 12 levels, and the action retaining the same chase and blast elements throughout, there isn't the long-term lastability that the superb presentation deserves.

A This incarnation combines the same high-speed graphics and rapid-fire gameplay, but features the added attraction of a beefy soundtrack.

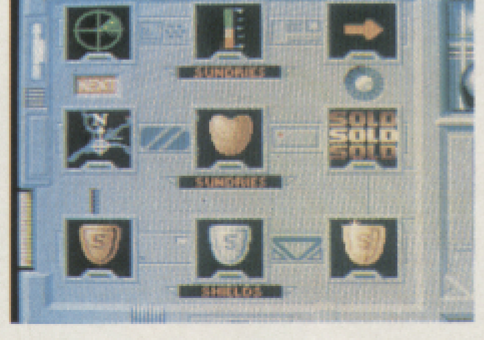
PC Resolution 101 has translated crim for crim, with only a couple of minor differences: the ability to view your criminal record during the game, and a keyboard control option. Both EGA and VGA are supported.



BOUNTY is useful since it provides the means to upgrade or simply repair your ship. As you progress through the city your skimmer is damaged by collisions or, if your armour is less than one quarter full strength, instruments are disabled by enemy fire. Travelling to one of the city's nine shop complexes (such as this) allows access to some serious upgrades.

THE FURTHER you progress in the game, the meaner and smarter the enemy becomes. Theta 4000 ground skimmers are easily lost: even if your opponents don't wear down the shield level and turn it into a pile of wreckage, there's always a chance of finding yourself in the middle of a lake with nowhere to go. Luckily there's a chance to upgrade your model with water skimming capability, too.





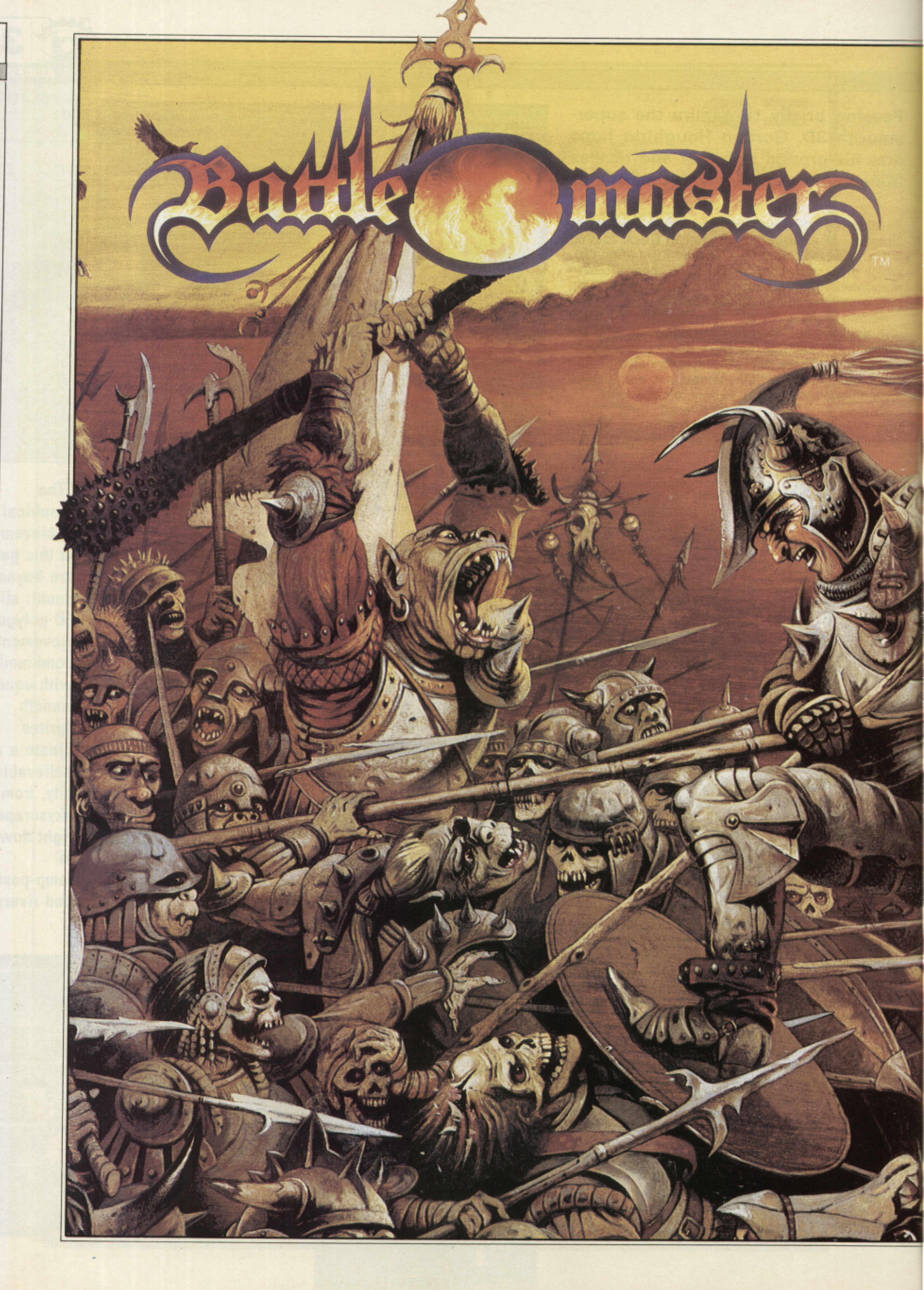
THERE are three kinds of shop. At Android Mabel's Odds 'n' Ends store you can buy peripherals such as a Direction Finder and City Map, plus three grades of shield from fibre-glass to titanium. Henry's Status Engine Shop has only one item on offer – Kevluminum Booster packs, which greatly improve manoeuvrability (up to nine can be fitted). Finally there's Old Timer Clive's Smoking Gun Shop, where you can pick up three grades of automatic machine gun, cannon and heat seeking missile – satisfaction is guaranteed.

THE DRUG runner is your primary target: his insurance company won't provide him with more than three ships like this one. A few good shots breaks down his armour level to the point where his fate is inevitable...



ONE down – 11 to go!

"The graphical achievements of this game are beyond doubt: slick 3D polygon movement combined with equally smooth sprites create a very believable city, from skyscrapers right down to lamp-posts and rivers."


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THEIR FINEST HOUR

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN°

Lucasfilm Games And US Gold

AMIGA

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SOUND	50%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	72%

OVERALL

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PRICE	£29.99
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Their Finest Hour

The Battle Of Britain

Fifty years ago, the Luftwaffe and the RAF fought for Britain off its island shores. Kati Hamza goes on a journey back through time.



BY 1940 most of Europe was on its knees and paying homage to a short former house painter with a small black moustache called Hitler. The German invasion of France had forced Britain back across the Channel in an undignified scramble and the Luftwaffe gambled that a short sharp shock would win them England too. History proved them wrong. The big question is, would the outcome have been the same if the battle had been fought differently, if the campaigns had been organised by other officers or if somebody else had flown the planes?

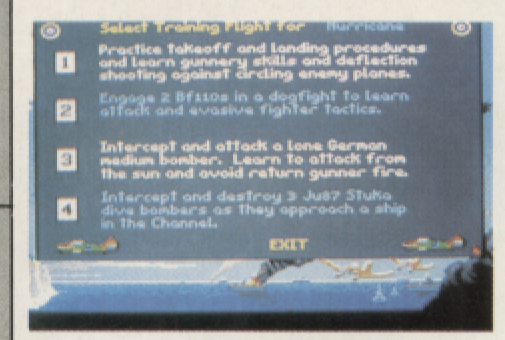
Miraculously, here's a game which gives you the chance to find out. Their Finest Hour places you in charge of one of eight RAF or Luftwaffe planes, presses the original mission orders in your hand and sends you off to fight the Jerry or the Hun. And for those who get a kick out of delegation there's even the opportunity to design your own operations, organise the whole campaign from scratch and watch what happens next.

A Their Finest Hour has several annoying drawbacks: the 3D is slow and jerky, there's a tad too much disk accessing, the controls are on the sluggish side and unless you have 1Mb you miss out on the sound. This doesn't cripple the gameplay but it does mean that in comparison with the technical wizardry of some of the big cheese flight simulations – such as **Falcon**, **F-29**, and **F-19** – this Battle Of Britain rates second best. It does, however, offer something that the others don't – short, tense action-packed missions, eight completely different types of plane, a mission construction set and the chance to rewrite history by commanding the battle yourself. The rudimentary cockpit, atmospheric in-depth manual, and relatively swift in-out missions manage to capture a real sense of historical authenticity – especially as all the missions you fly are actually based on fact. For committed top guns all that won't compensate for the technical shortcomings – but for flight simulation beginners and Spitfire enthusiasts it's worth taking out on a test-flight.

PC PC pilots can go out and practice dive-bombing right now for a training fee of 29.99. The gameplay is essentially the same though its speed varies according to the capabilities of your PC. If your PC isn't fast your mission won't be either.

ST Promising much the same graphics and gameplay as the Amiga version, your Finest Hour on the ST is imminent. To get the best out of the battle, you need 29.99 by the end of June.

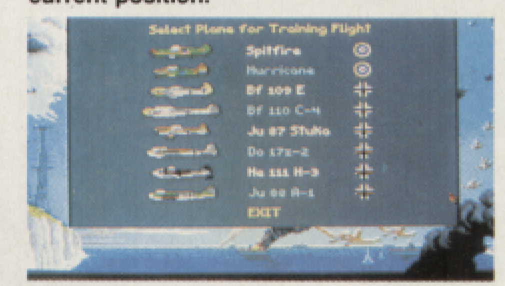
"The rudimentary cockpit, atmospheric in-depth manual, and relatively swift in-out missions manage to capture a real sense of historical authenticity – especially as all the missions you fly are actually based on fact."



OF THE 96 preset missions, 32 are training runs designed to let you get the feel of the controls and give you practice at take-off, landing, evasion and dog-fights. The rest are all combat adventures based on documented confrontations which actually occurred during the war. They include knocking out air-bases, playing a role in a concentrated strike, intercepting incoming fighters and protecting other aeroplanes in solo or group flights. If you fly a bomber you usually get a fighter escort.



THE MISSION map, providing information on target positions, distance and bearing of enemy bases, plus the position of friendlies, is updated whenever a newcomer arrives on the scene. It can be accessed at any point during a flight – useful for pinpointing your current position.



WHICH side are you on? There are eight different airborne coffins to choose from – two British fighters and a selection of German dive bombers, medium bombers and fighter planes. Each has its own particular specifications, weapon capabilities and crew positions.

TRUE to the real thing there's nothing fancy about these functional cockpit displays. Forget radar and sophisticated HUDs – altimeter, speed, RPM, banking and pitch indicators are the basics and that's pretty much the sum of what you get. Each plane (in this case the Hurricane) has its own unique instrument panel and there's a replay camera option with a limited amount of film to enable you to watch the action later – if you make it back.

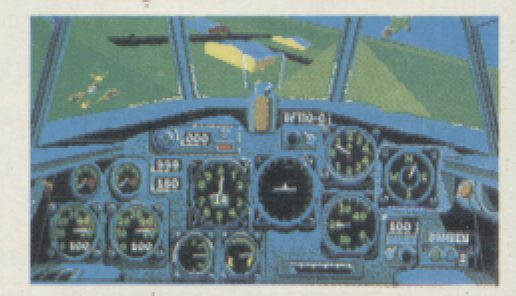




IN ADDITION to the cockpit position, there are four extra internal views of the action – one from either side of the plane, one from underneath and a scan mode. Scan allows you to pan around the plane and view the surrounding landscape from any angle. It's particularly helpful for locating enemy targets and the direction of the light – a good fighter pilot uses it to advantage and attacks from the angle of the sun.

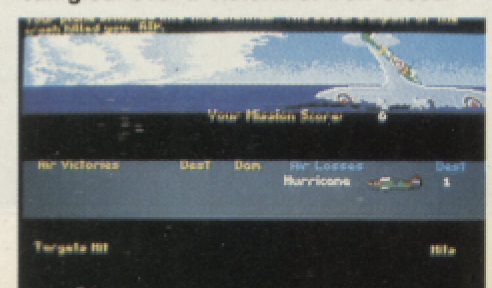


THE MORE sophisticated planes have room for more crew – rear-gunners, side-gunners, nose gunners and, as in this case, a bombadier. You can save crew and pilots to disk and re-use them at a later date (auto experienced crews tend to make fewer errors) or simply make do with the bunch you were assigned.

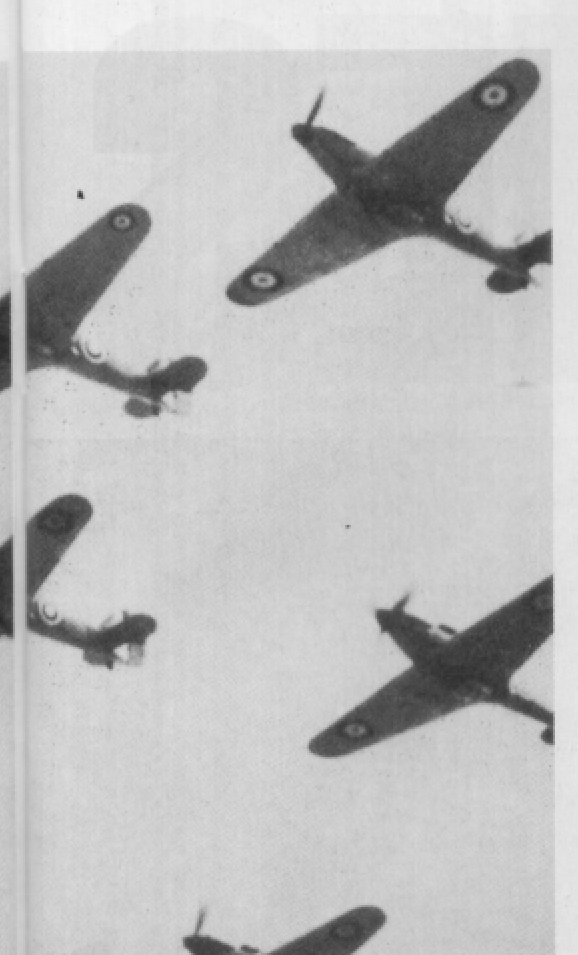


SURFACE targets are usually heavily defended in the air – if you survive long enough to drop your bombs, there's no guarantee that you make it back. Possible tactics include dive bombing – plunging straight down to the target before releasing your bombs with deathly accuracy – or keeping low to avoid radar and enemy air defence.

WHETHER you survive, ditch, eject, get rescued or become a Prisoner Of War, the program assesses how well you did. All pilots and flight crews involved have their combat records updated and if you excel yourself you can gloat over a Victoria or Iron Cross.



Hour





DON'T do it, Mother—



NEVER IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN CONFLICT...

THE OUTCOME of the Battle Of Britain was a crucial episode in the Second World War. If the Luftwaffe had succeeded in wiping out British Fighter Command, there would have been little to halt the German invasion of Britain.

Right from the start the British forces were at a disadvantage. The Germans had more planes and combat in the Spanish Civil War had made them more experienced. Meanwhile, the British failure to make any visible impression on the Luftwaffe during the retreat from Dunkirk in May 1940, meant that RAF morale was very low.

The Germans spent June and July drawing British aircraft into battle over the Channel but Adlertag, August 13th, marked the commencement of the official battle and Germany's biggest offensive yet. Hermann Goering, the Luftwaffe's commander, estimated it would take about four days to rub every British fighter out of the sky. After that, the coast would be clear for the official invasion, codenamed Operation Sealion, to take place.

He was wrong. The battle raged for several months with heavy losses on both sides. Throughout it was hindered by problems of intelligence, bad planning and muddled communications. British Fighter Command had the advantage of radar but that didn't prevent the forces on the ground shooting down the occasional friendly plane or bailed-out pilot by mistake. Incomplete information meant that the Germans mixed up targets and heavily overestimated British losses.

As a result of these shortcomings and Goering's erratic strategies – he continuously altered his plans – the Luftwaffe failed to achieve its original objective. On September 15th, Goering launched two huge formations against London. They were intercepted by 170 Spitfires and Hurricanes and in the ensuing battle the Germans lost 56 aircraft, the British 27. On September 17th, British intelligence intercepted a secret German signal ordering that Operation Sealion be indefinitely shelved. Hitler was turning his attentions to Russia and though bombing and air attacks continued, invasion was no longer a threat.

It was victory at a very high cost. To secure the safety of the nation, countless pilots and civilians had given their lives. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF 16-BIT GAMES

WHAT'S THIS? A magazine within a magazine?

Well, almost.

It's the second installment of a never-ending partwork. A partwork of the most comprehensive gameplay guides yet seen. Everything you need to know about... well, everything to do with 16-bit games really. We can't guarantee to cover every 16-bit game in the whole world ever, but as momentum is gathered over the coming months you can be sure we will try (!).

Some guides 'happen' in one month, others are spread over two, three or even four months depending on their size and how much (of the game) is to be given away. For example, this month the 'solutions' to levels five to eight of US Gold's **Crack Down** are provided – last month we gave away the first four levels (complete with Guards), while next month we take you through the last eight levels, along with the cheat modes. This gives you enough time to play for yourself. And of course if you get stuck, you know help isn't far off.

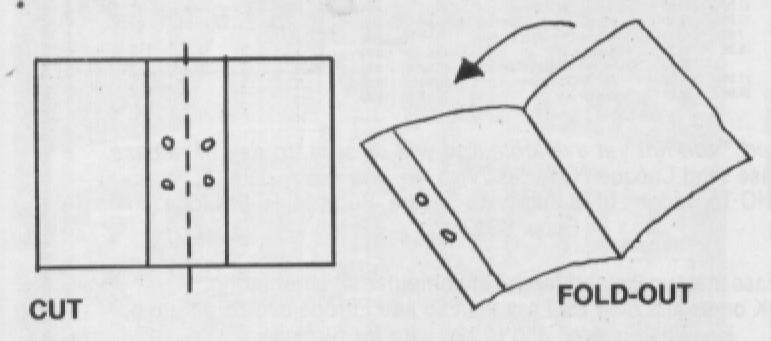
With the ball rolling this month, four guides are featured. And there are more to come – of games both old and new. So dig out those ageing classics that you never quite completed. The One will show you the way.

Should you find that, when a guide is complete, you have something extra to add, don't hesitate to write. The beauty of this system is its flexibility – addenda can be added at any stage.

Also, if you have any suggestions for future guides – or you have any complete solutions (including maps where appropriate) – don't hesitate to send them to us. Anyone who provides sufficient useful material will be suitably rewarded with software of their choice.

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Putting a guide together couldn't be simpler (well, it could have been last month if we'd had some diagrams!).
i) Remove the centre section.
ii) Splice the pages down the middle (some, like the Crack Down maps, are fold-outs so a cut is not necessary).



iii) Assemble the parts in numerical order. You may wish to wait until you have all necessary sections of a multi-part guide before you put it together.

THIS MONTH

CRACK DOWN
US Gold
Part Two

FEATURES
The Remaining Guards
Maps Of Levels Five, Six, Seven & Eight With Tips

HAMMERFIST
Activision
Part One

FEATURES
All Level One's Adversaries
Level One Map & Tips

E-MOTION
US Gold
Part One

FEATURES
General Tips
The First 20 Screens

ZANY GOLF
Electronic Arts
Part One

FEATURES
General Tips
Courses One To Five With Tips



COMING SOON

RECENT RELEASES

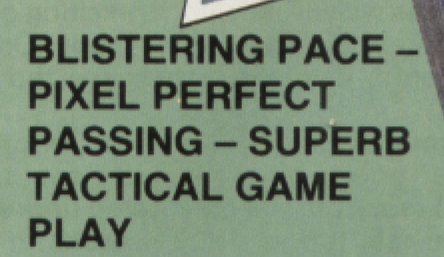
CASTLE MASTER (Domark)
INFESTATION (Pysgnosis)
WARHEAD (Motion Picture House)
ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS (Domark)
AND MORE!

BINDERS

Special binders will be on sale through these pages in due course, but for the time-being, pop into your local stationers and buy some of those two-part metal fasteners. We also recommend you purchase a box of sticky ring reinforcements from your local stationers and plop one on each hole (don't forget to punch them out first).

If you don't already own a hole-punch, you can either buy one (inexpensive really) or create your own holes by using a sharp point (eg: a pencil). But make sure a) you put some Plasticene beneath the 'hole zone', and b) you have an adult to help you.

KICK OFF 2



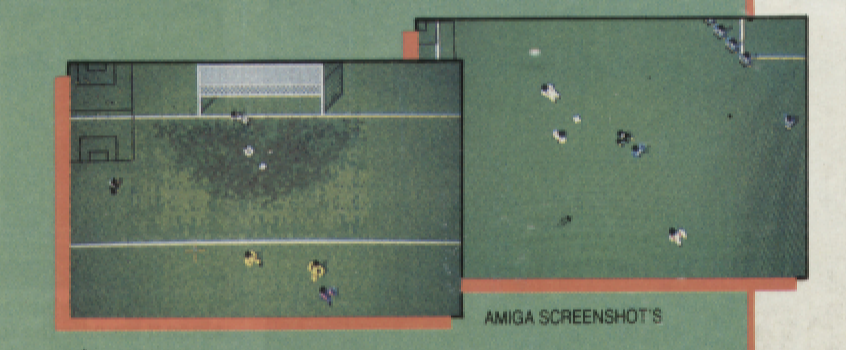
KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the game play of KICK OFF, winner of THE GAME OF THE YEAR award in U.K. and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled the players the world over.

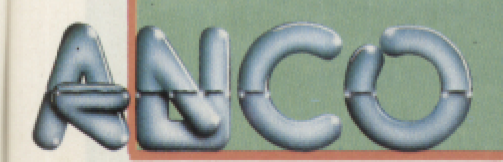
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SOUND	81%
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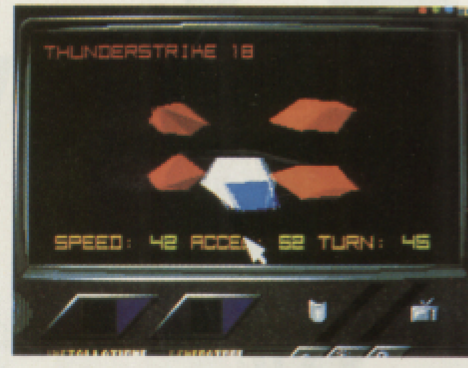
OVERALL 85%

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PRICE	£24.99
OUT	July 4th



THE MEGACORP Referees Committee has approved five ships for use in the Games. The StrikeHornet models (22 and 24) both suffer from slow top speed: the 22 has good acceleration and fair manoeuvrability, whereas the 24 has poor acceleration but unmatched handling. The Thunderfly range (10 and 25) both have excellent top speed performance, but suffer from poor acceleration (model 10) or slow turning speed (model 25). The best bet is probably the Thunderstrike 18 – a good all-rounder.



ONE LAST smile for the cameras before launching might not get you extra viewing figures, but it gives everyone watching a face to match the name.

Thunderstrike

Gordon Houghton takes a time tunnel trip to the 23rd Century to do battle in Millennium's future sport.

BY 2238 people have got bored of the World Cup and Rollerball: only death-or-glory combat sports are entertaining enough to attract mass TV audiences. The annual Ground Defence Games is the market leader, inviting pilots from all over the galaxy to survive lethal combat in a variety of hostile arenas especially designed for the contest.

The basic aim is to defend your own base and destroy enemy drone generators, but the action doesn't end there: the pilot must attain good hit and defence rates as well as playing an exciting game in order to maintain his television ratings. Once the round is cleared, a victory roll keeps the crowd happy.

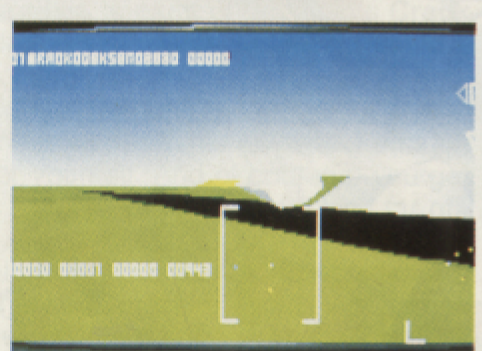
Between rounds pilots have their performance assessed: a good hit rate (efficient use of ammunition) results in the craft being upgraded. A poor defence rate (under 100%) results in downgrading. A pilot who clears all five arenas (that's 50 rounds) is awarded the supreme accolade: Defender Of The Ground.

PC You might think that **Thunderstrike** is simply a 3D version of **Defender**, but what makes it so different is its presentation. The most noticeable aspect is the impressive non-standard 3D display. It isn't a behind-the-ship or in-the-cockpit viewpoint – the craft is viewed from a mobile camera which occasionally finds it hard to keep up with you, especially over rough terrain. Then there's a choice of five very different vehicles, six kinds of intelligent alien, bonus pods and – above all – the TV ratings system. You really do feel that you are taking part in a future sport – with aims more complex than simply blasting everything in sight – and not just playing another shoot 'em up. The amount you please the audience acts both as a measure of your own ease with craft handling (the ratings increase according to your entertainment value) and as a means of upgrading the vehicle. The action side is particularly well implemented: excellent use of VGA creates a convincing impression of a artificially-generated terrain, and there's enough variety and stomach-churning, frantic action to keep any shoot 'em up addict happy. The price is a bit steep for a five-terrain, 50-level environment – but it's a unique concept which deserves to do well. If your PC has the power to run the landscape at high speed, you won't find a more addictive shoot 'em up available.

A The Amiga version should feature similar music and sound effects, but won't incorporate the keyboard option sported by the PC.

ST Like the Amiga version, ST Thunderstrike is out at the same time and price. Again, there's no keyboard option. No major differences in gameplay are planned, and the speed should be guaranteed.

"You really do feel that you are taking part in a future sport – with aims more complex than simply blasting everything in sight – and not just playing another shoot 'em up."



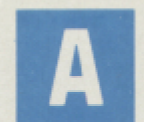
BLACK guidance tracks run around each arena and provide a convenient, swift method of automatic travel. Simply line up your craft with the track and pull yourself down into it.

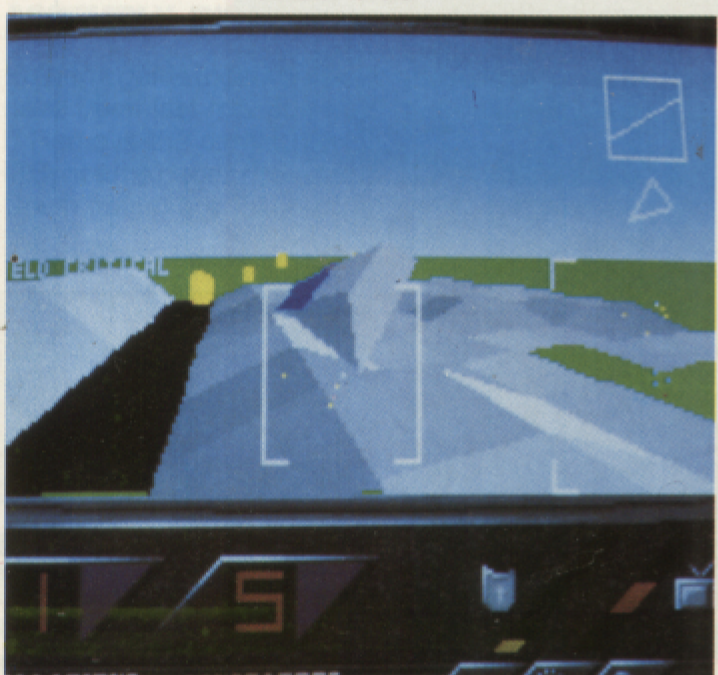
THE OBJECT of the game is to defend your ground installations and incapacitate all the drone generators and enemy drones in each round. The generators are easily dispatched with a few shots, but flying over an active one drains your shield. Lose all your home bases and MegaCorp terminates your contract.

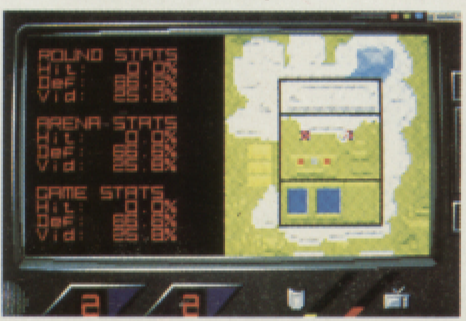
ALL VEHICLES are fitted with a standard energy shield to protect them from attacks by enemy drones. At set intervals the referees fire a variety of such drones into the arena from the generators: these are armed with the latest in sophisticated military hardware. The most annoying are the Saboteurs who home in on your installations. The most deadly are the Mutants (Saboteurs who have successfully deactivated one of your bases), but these only appear frequently on later levels.



SOMETIMES when a pilot destroys a drone a pick-up pod appears: installation is automatic once collected. There are five types of pod: Defence (spins around your craft to deflect enemy fire), Twin (dual shot), Power (shots turn red and each represents five yellow shots), Shield (replenishes the level by one quarter) and Turbo (four units of five-second turbo boost).





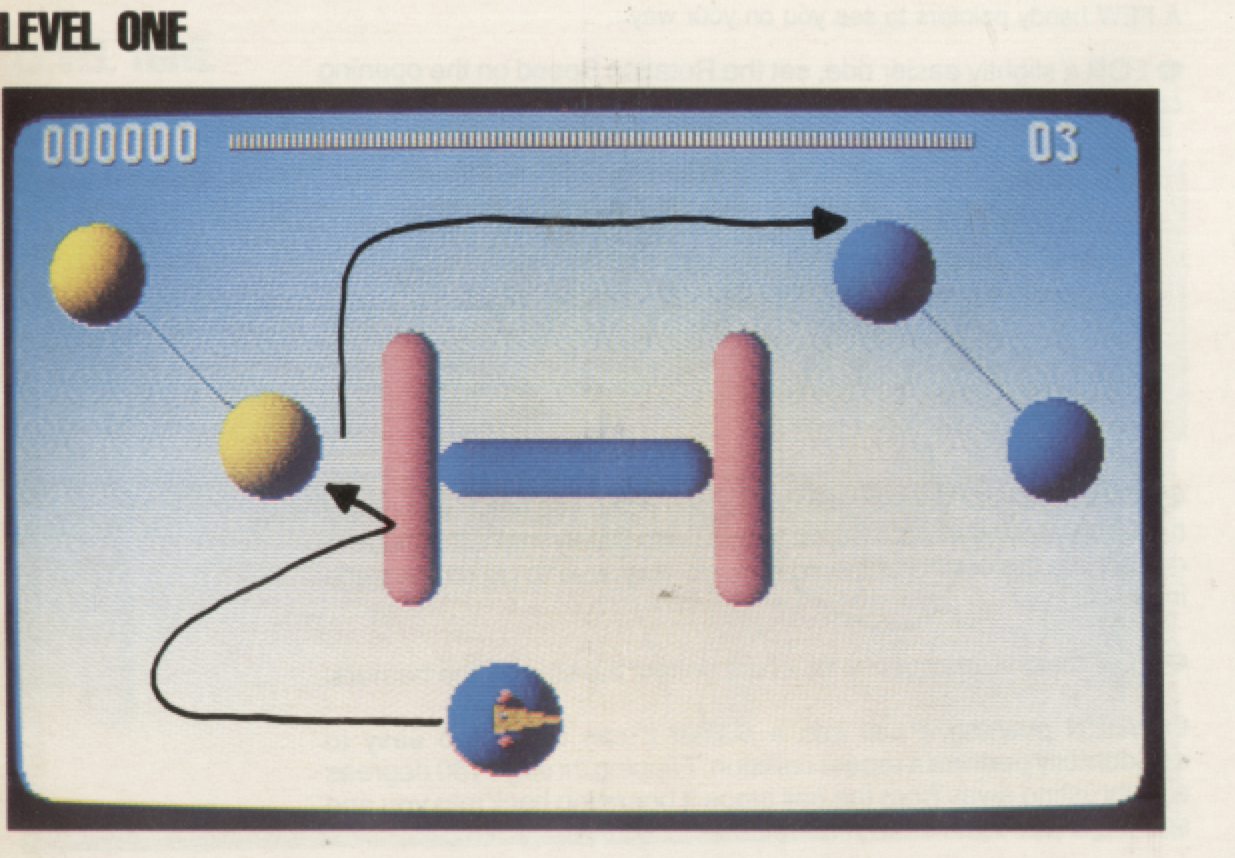


IT'S ALWAYS wise to keep an eye on the map, since it reveals the location of enemy bases and gives details about the current terrain and track layout.

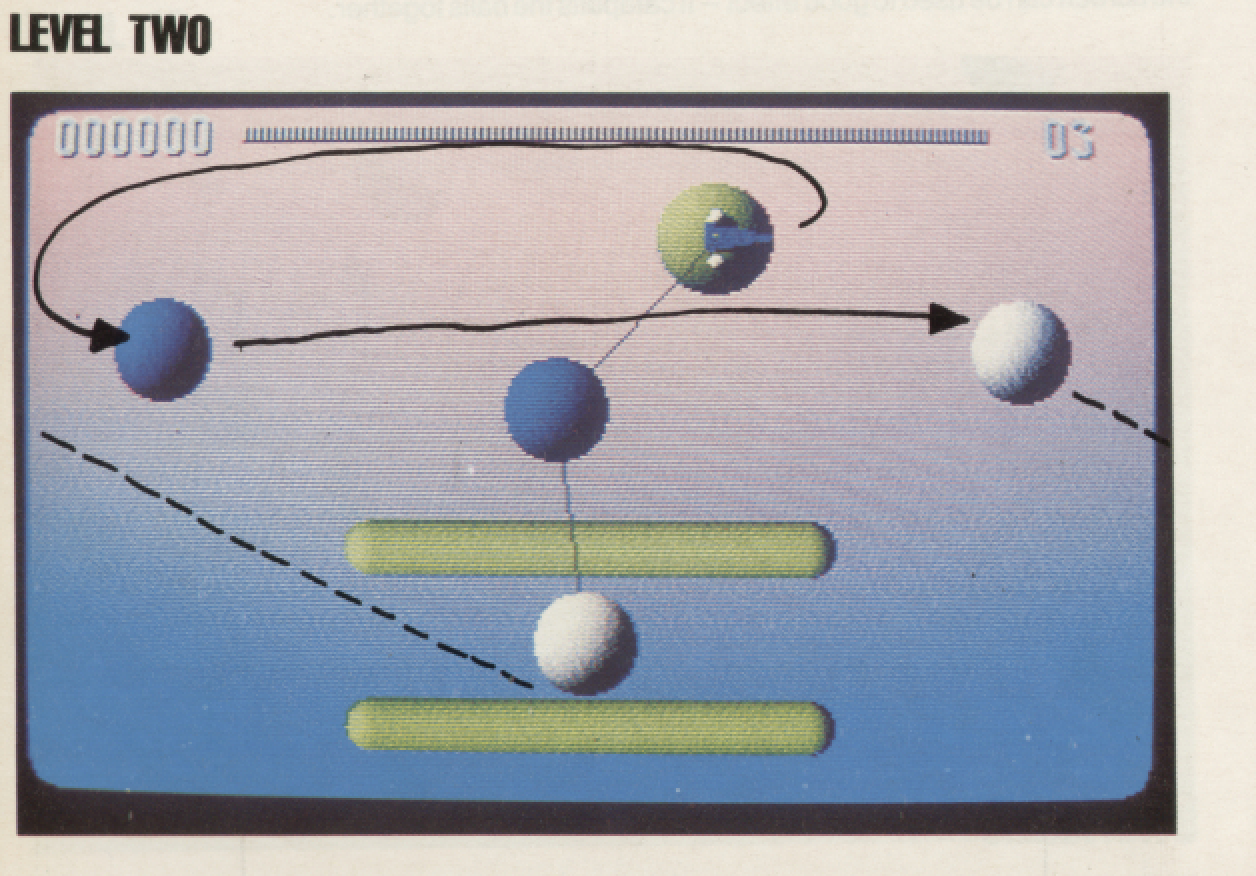
SUCCESS isn't just a question of ratings: true Defenders Of The Ground who complete an entire arena are rewarded with some metal for the mantlepiece.



LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO



E-MOTION

US Gold

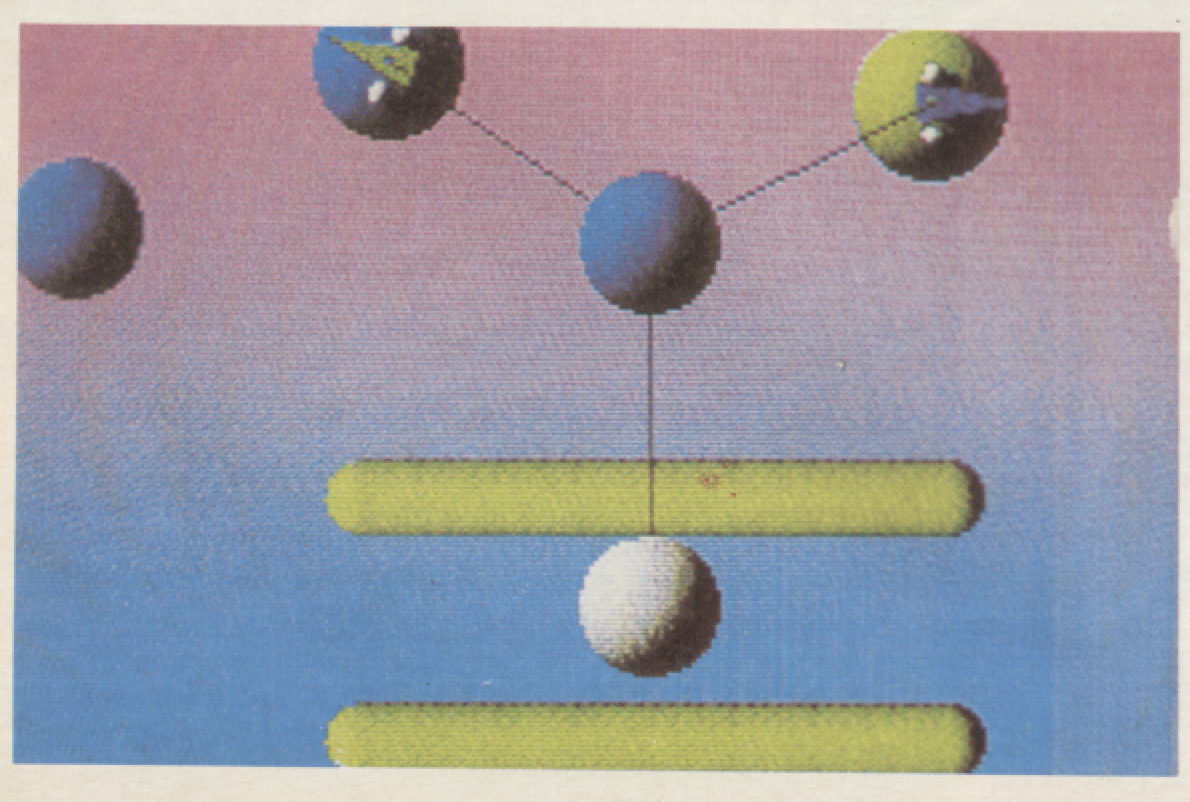
IMAGINE a place where the law of inertia rules. A place inhabited by nothing but spherical cells, abstract obstacles... And a lone ship. In this shapeless universe, trouble is brewing. The cells are slowly but surely becoming unstable, and before long they will explode, taking everything else with it.

Welcome to the weird and wonderful world of **E-Motion**.

The Assembly Line is the development team responsible for this form of atomic snooker. The idea came from John Dale, who was inspired by Atari Games' coin-op classic **Asteroids** – primarily the rotate and thrust mode of control. But the team was determined to produce something other than yet another clone, which is why instead of shooting things, you push them together – opposing colours creating pods which grow into balls. "That's an idea from Williams' **Joust**," John reveals. "When you kill a bird it drops an egg. If you don't get the egg it hatches out into another bird."

The unique visual style was more a result of necessity than an ideal, though a desirable effect was achieved. None of the team specialises in art, so the spheres, barriers and so on were generated on an Acorn Archimedes.

The labour was divided fairly and squarely between John and programmer Adrian Stephens. It took a month to produce a working version from conception, and then about eight months of tweaking and polishing. Understandably, working so closely on the project means that Adrian's become proficient at playing it – he can do all 50 levels in about 15 minutes!



SOME GENERAL TIPS

A FEW handy pointers to see you on your way...

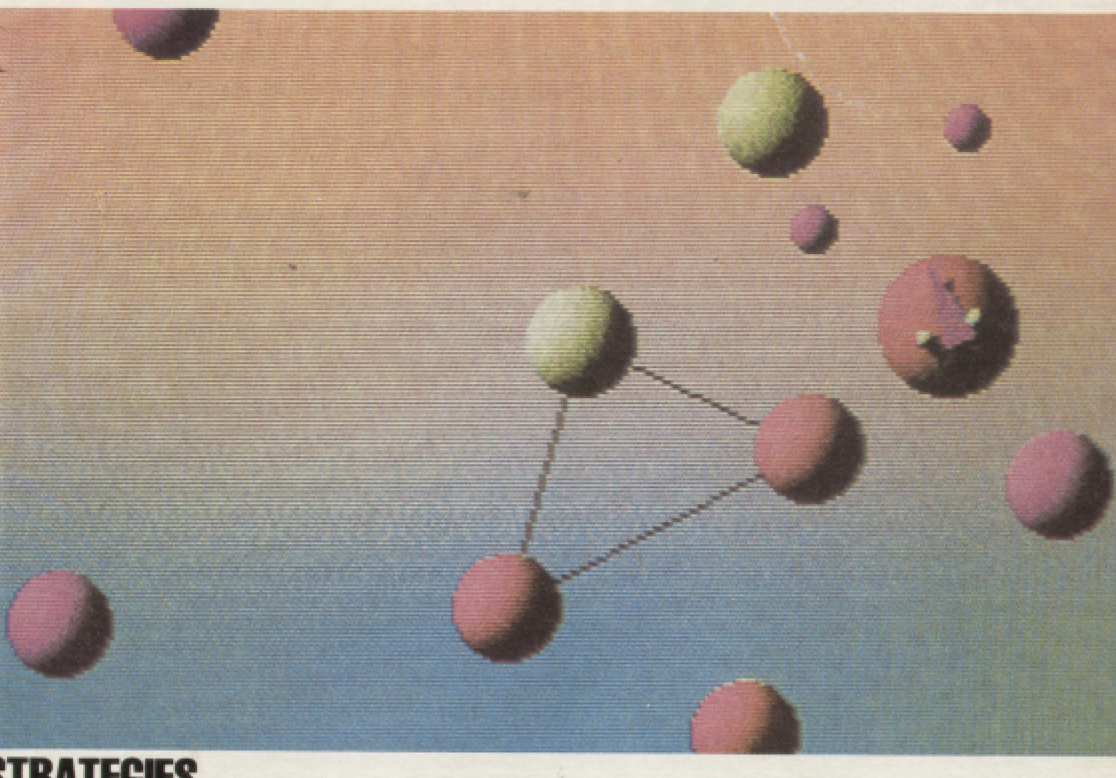
- FOR a slightly easier ride, set the Rotation Speed on the opening options menu to SLOW.



- DON'T waste time turning through 180 degrees. Use the flip facility instead.



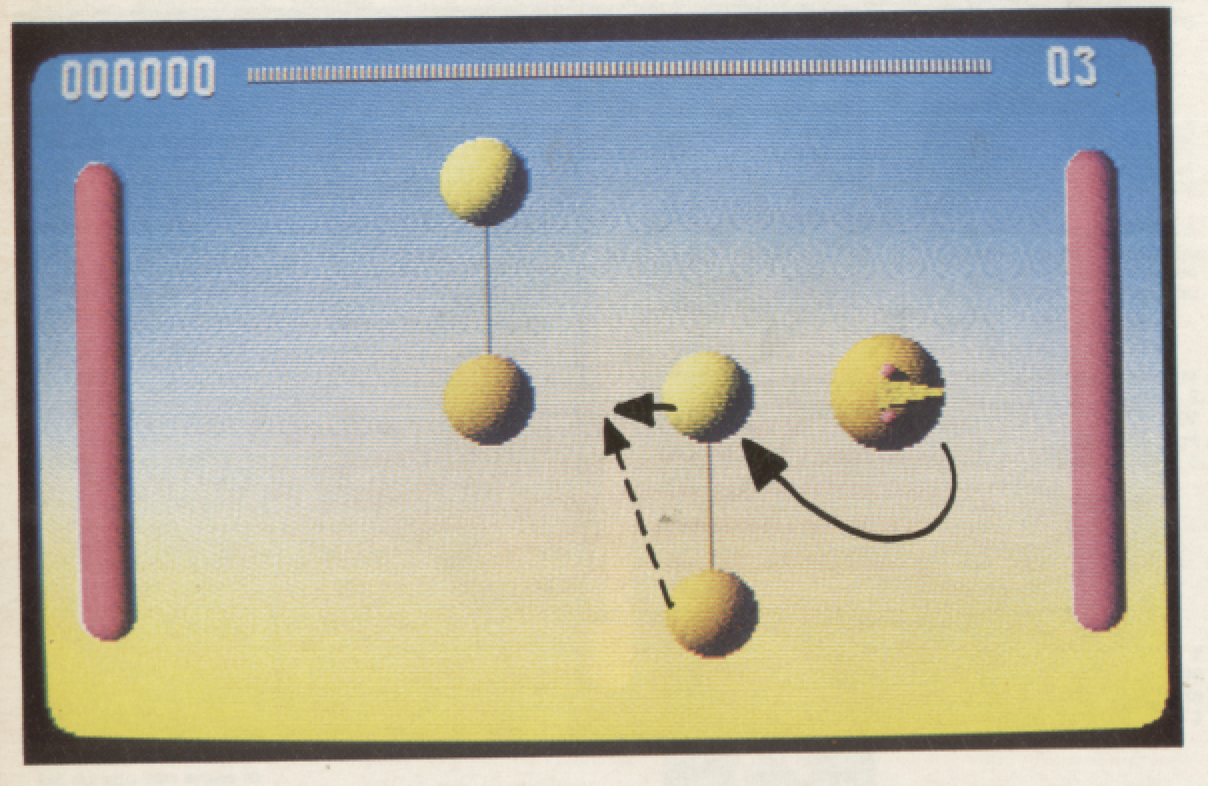
- WHY fight your way across the screen when you can make use of the wrap-around effect? Some levels deliberately make it difficult to get across the centre of the screen, so you have to go off the edge instead.
- FOR maximum impact with a ball, deflect the ship off the barriers.
- WHEN pushing a ball into a barrier it can be all too easy to accidentally perform a repeat collision. Flipping through 180 degrees and thrusting away from the ball stops it bouncing back into you and spoiling the effect of the manoeuvre.
- THE WAY that the elastic reforms when a ball goes off the edge of the screen can be used to good effect – it catapults the balls together.



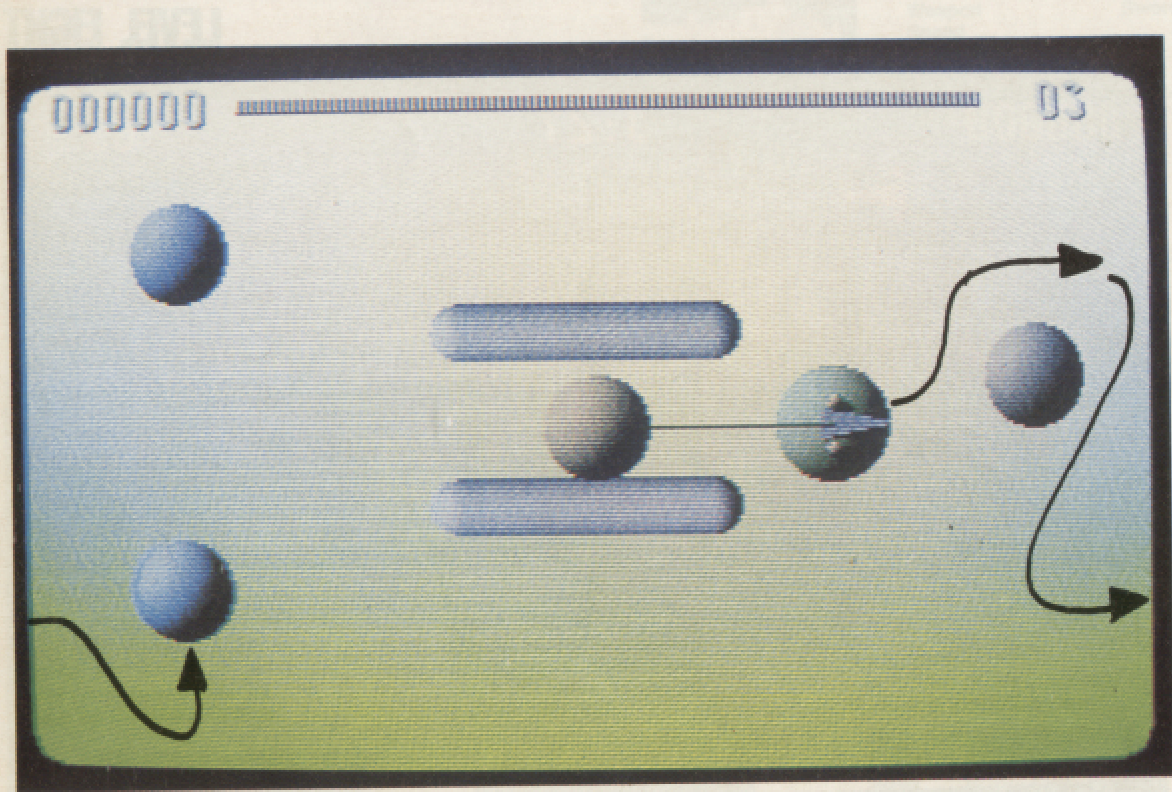
STRATEGIES

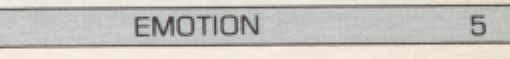
THERE are many ways to complete each level, but on the pages which follow we have provided the optimum 'routes' to success (including the order in which to collect the pods on the bonus screens). The screens are as large as possible to minimise any possible confusion and maximise ease of reference.

LEVEL NINE

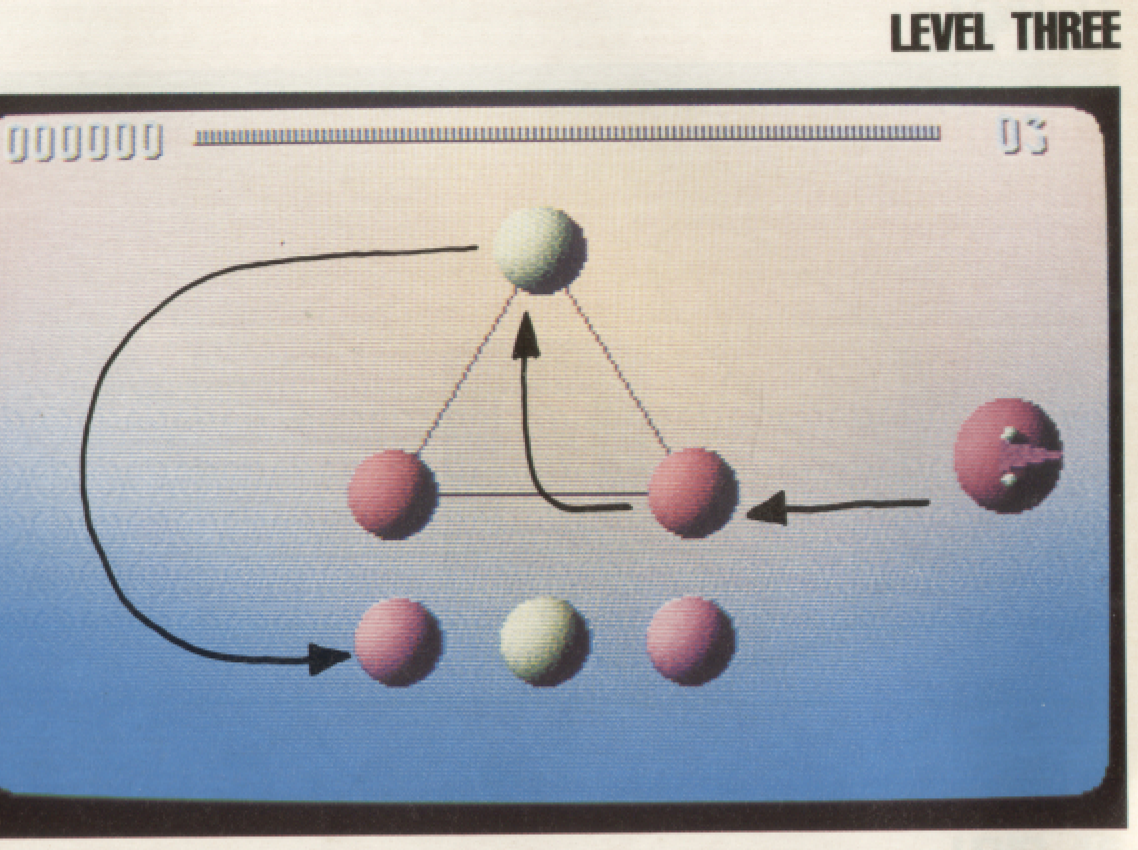


LEVEL 10

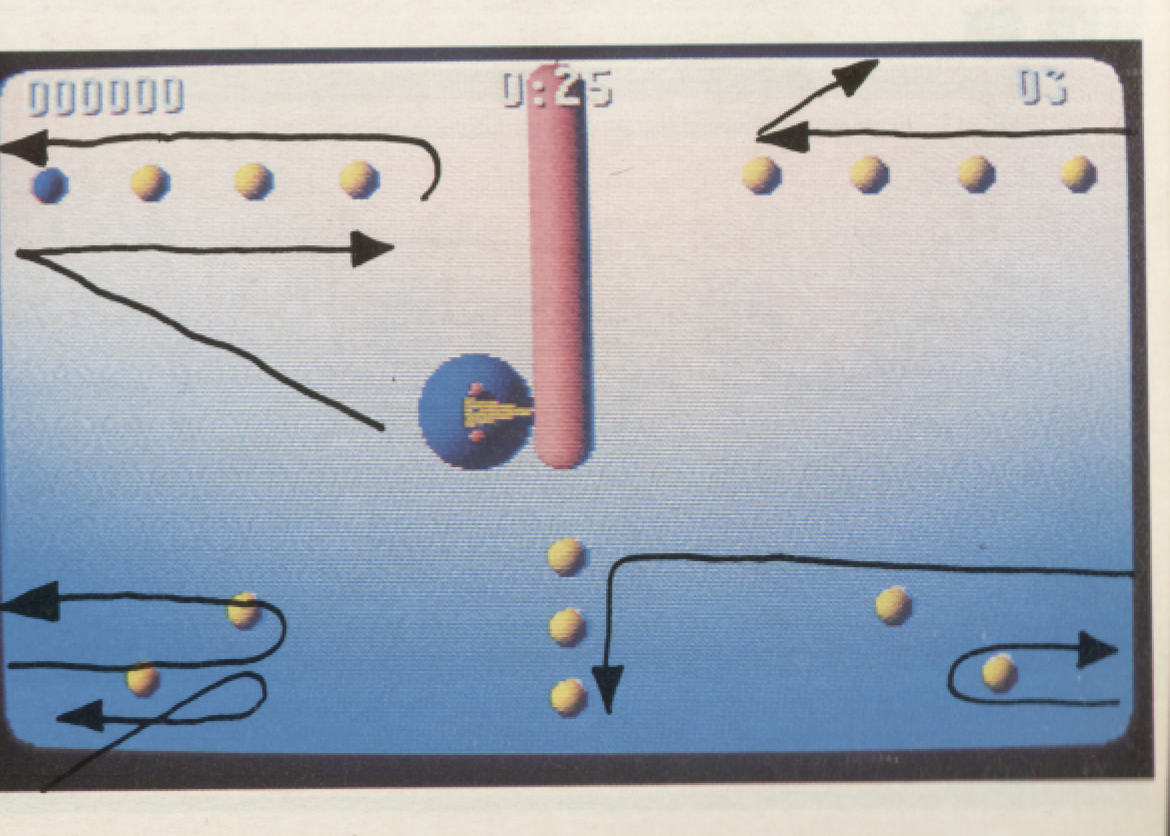


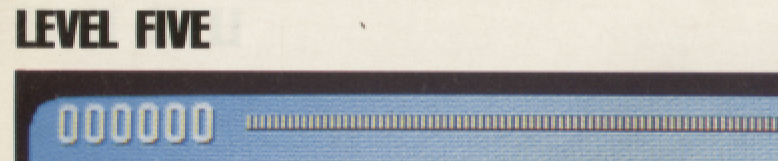


LEVEL THREE

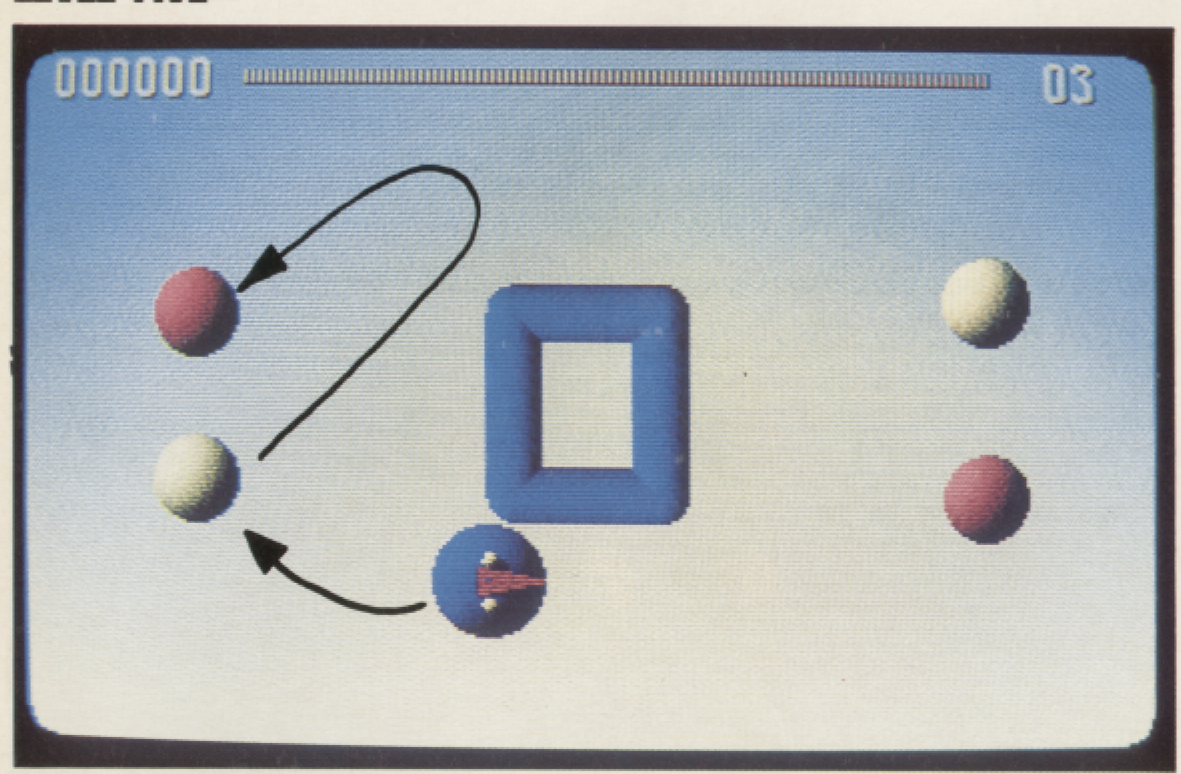


LEVEL FOUR

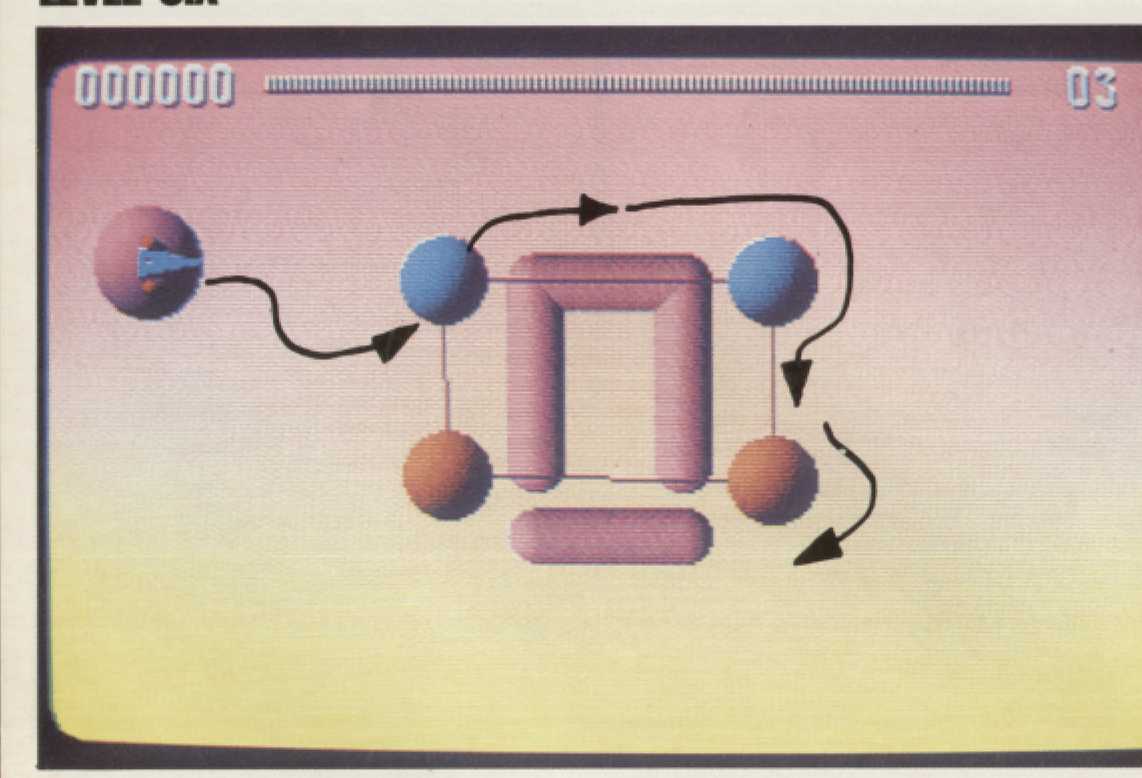




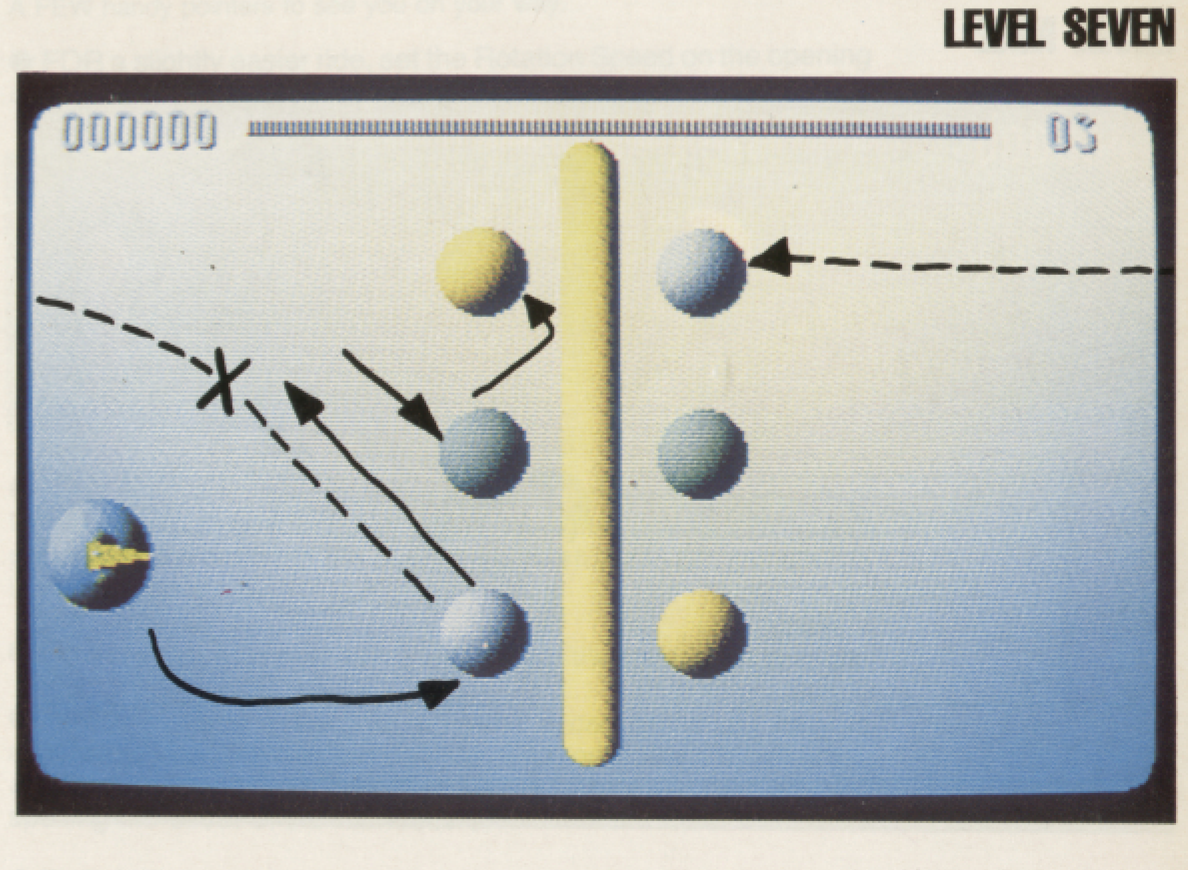
LEVEL FIVE



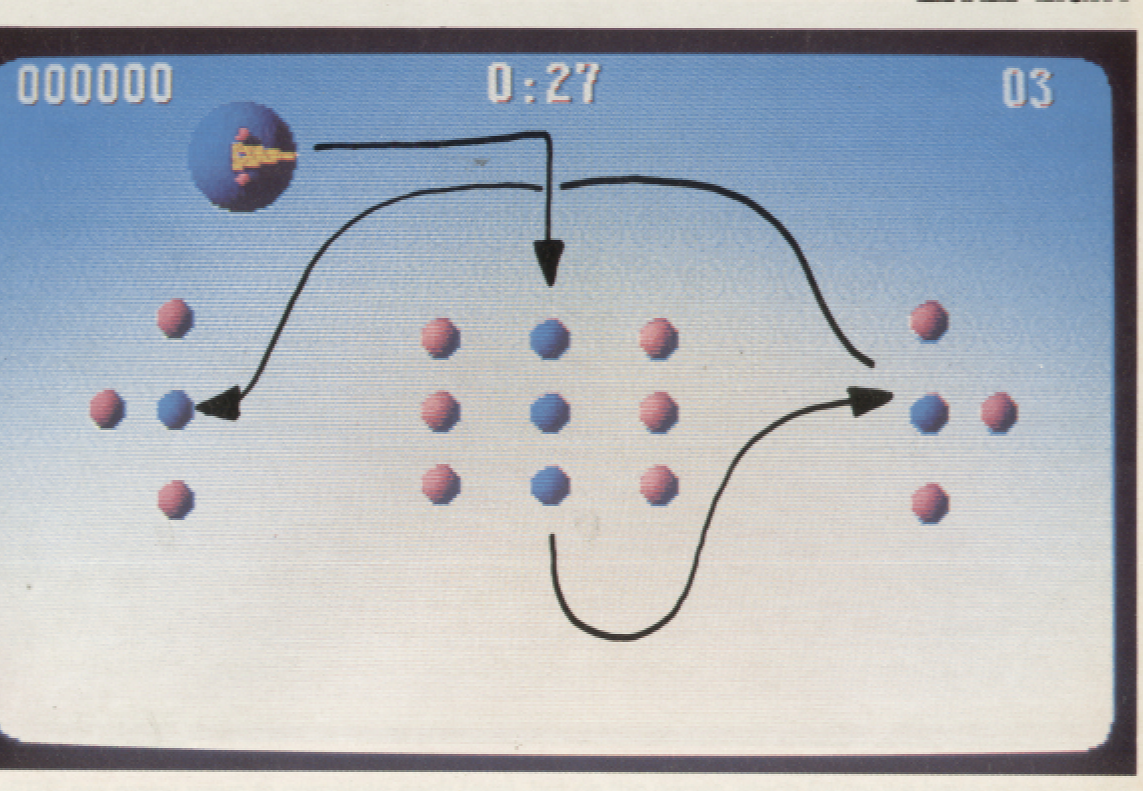
LEVEL SIX

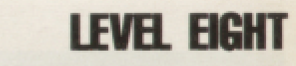


LEVEL SEVEN



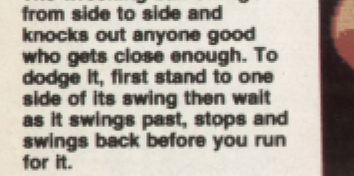
LEVEL EIGHT



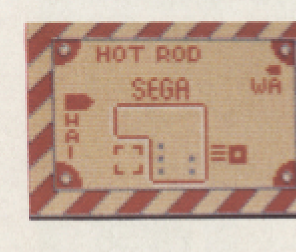


SPECIAL OBSTACLES

THESE later levels feature some dangerous special obstacles to negotiate. This is how to be safest.



THE WRECKING BALL
The wrecking ball swings from side to side and knocks out anyone good who gets close enough. To dodge it, first stand to one side of its swing then wait as it swings past, stops and swings back before you run for it.



THE ADVERTISEMENT BRIDGE
Brandishing an advertisement for Sega's Hot Rod, the bridge opens and closes with regularity. If Ben or Andy is standing on it when it opens, they plummet to their doom. To cross safely, wait until the bridge is fully open then just as it closes, run over to the other side.



THE PRAYBOY BRIDGE
This bridge advertises Prayboy – a funny joke, no? Shoot it to make it fall so you can cross to the other side. Otherwise you will fall down and die.

GENERATORS

THE GUARD-producing generators found on the first four levels appear in different forms on the later stages. These are the ones to look out for.

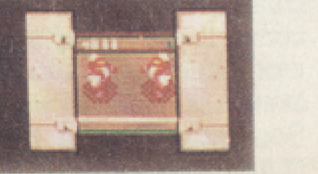
LEVEL FIVE
The car doors fly open and Guards climb out.



LEVEL SIX
Like Level Two, trapdoors open up to release Guards.



LEVEL SEVEN
Cracks cause the problems here. Step too close to one and it collapses, whereupon a Joker leaps out.



LEVEL EIGHT
Lifts elevate Guards onto the scene, just like Level Four.

THE GUARDS OF DOCTOR K

SOME OF the eight different types of Guard that appear throughout the first four levels reappear on the later levels. There are a few new faces to watch out for, though, so here are the facts you need to know...



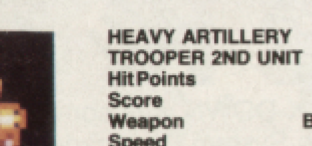
MANDRILL

Hit Points	3
Score	300
Weapon	Its Arms
Speed	4

The Mandrill is a special case. It only moves around diagonally, so play safe and approach it from the side. Now you can kick its butt.

STORM TROOPER 2ND UNIT

Hit Points	2
Score	200
Weapon	Machine Gun
Speed	3



HEAVY ARTILLERY TROOPER 2ND UNIT

Hit Points	2
Score	200
Weapon	Bazooka
Speed	3

URBAN TROOPER 2ND UNIT

Hit Points	1
Score	300
Weapon	Sword
Speed	3

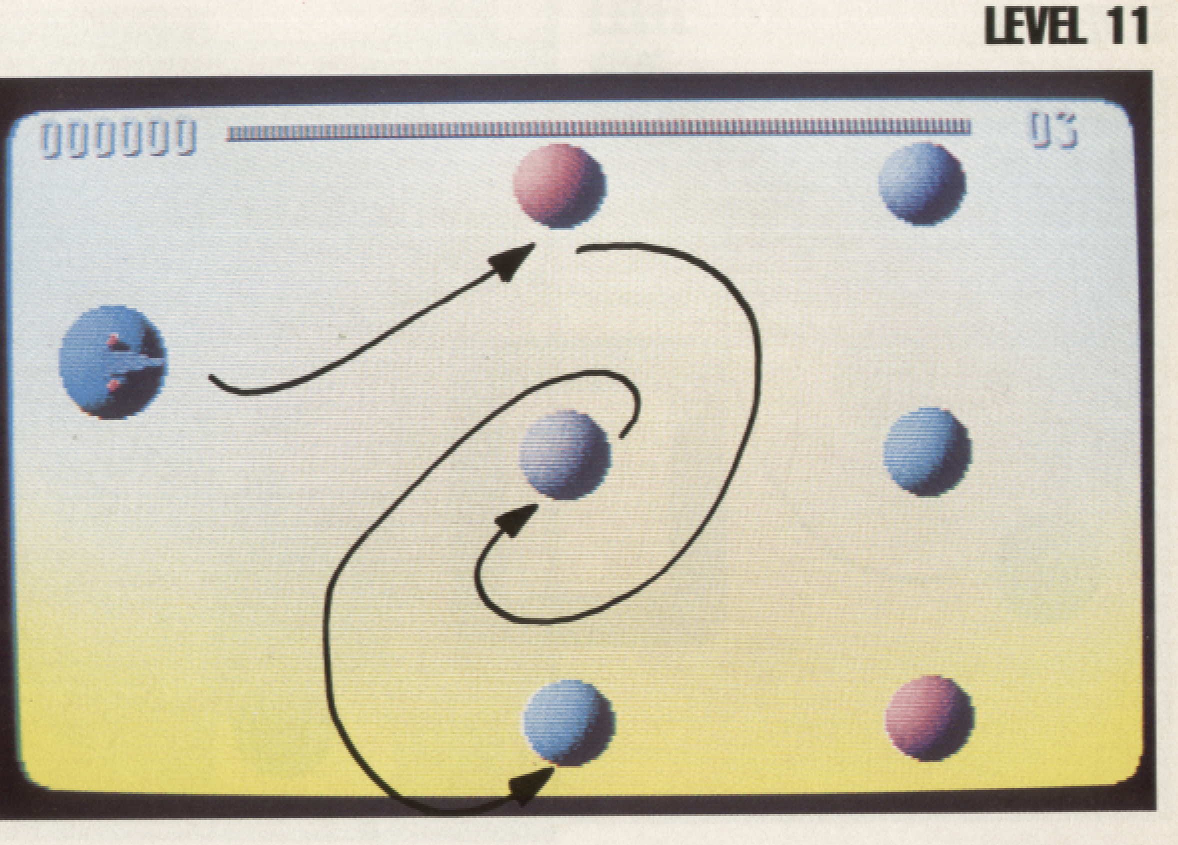
The Urban Trooper 2nd Unit is a strange fighter. He can only be killed with one of Ben and Andy's kicks.

THE JOKER

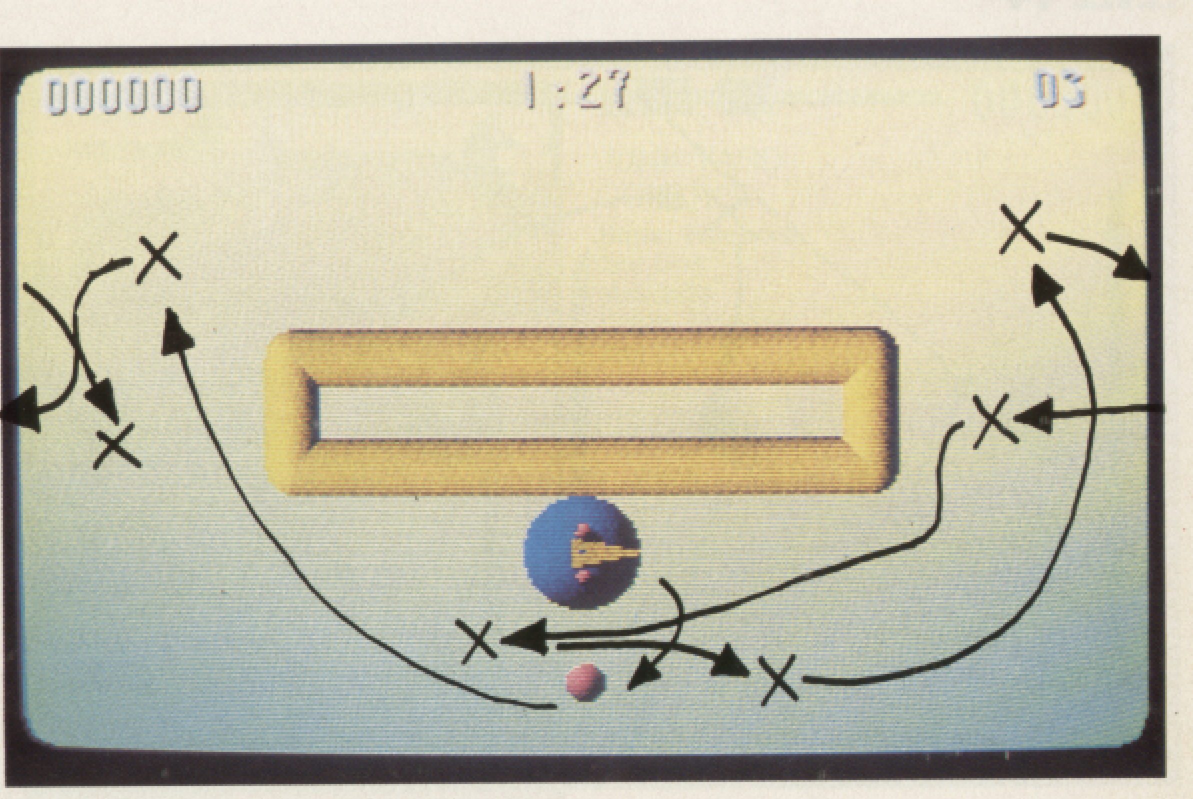
Hit Points	1
Score	100
Weapon	
Speed	6

The Joker is one of the fastest beings on the planet. Don't try to outrun him as he is much quicker than Ben and Andy put together!

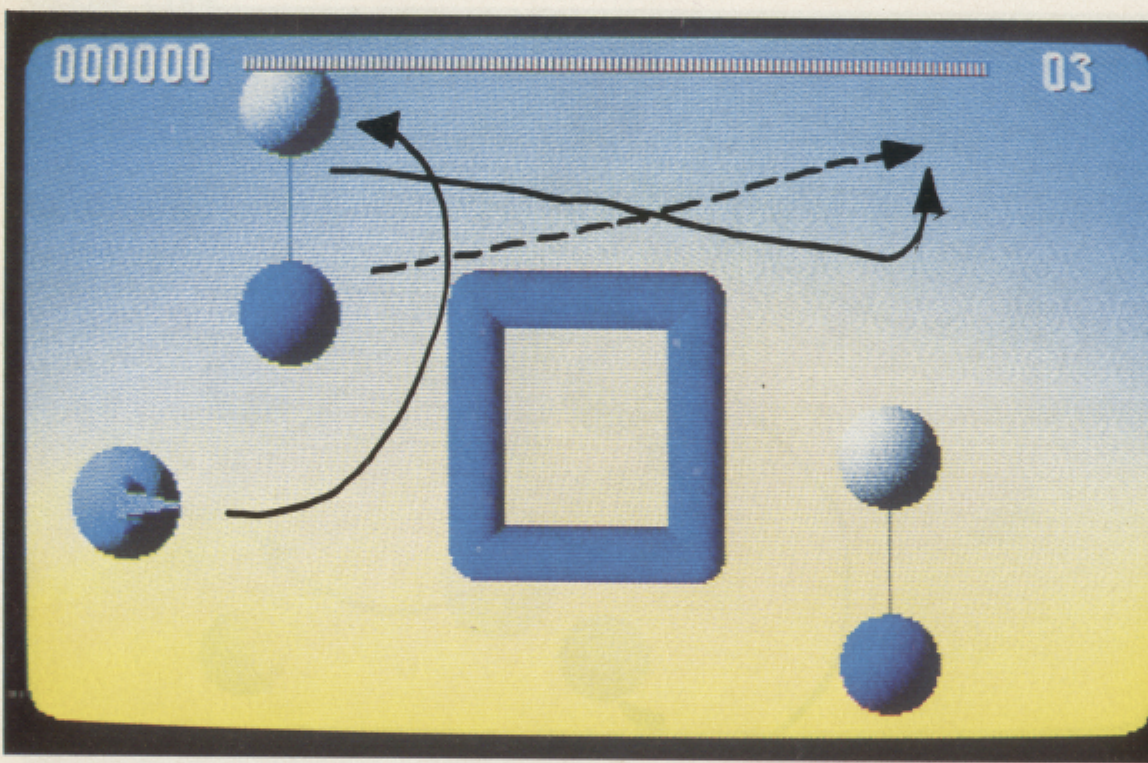
LEVEL 11



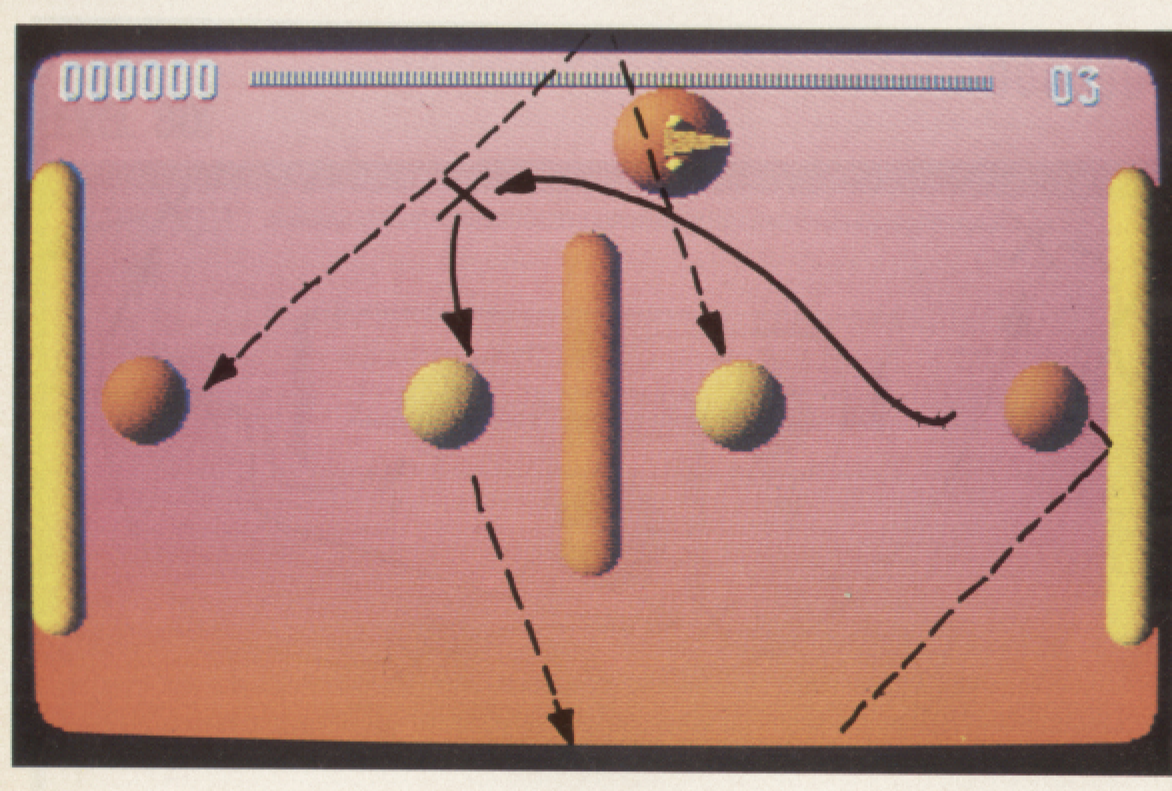
LEVEL 12



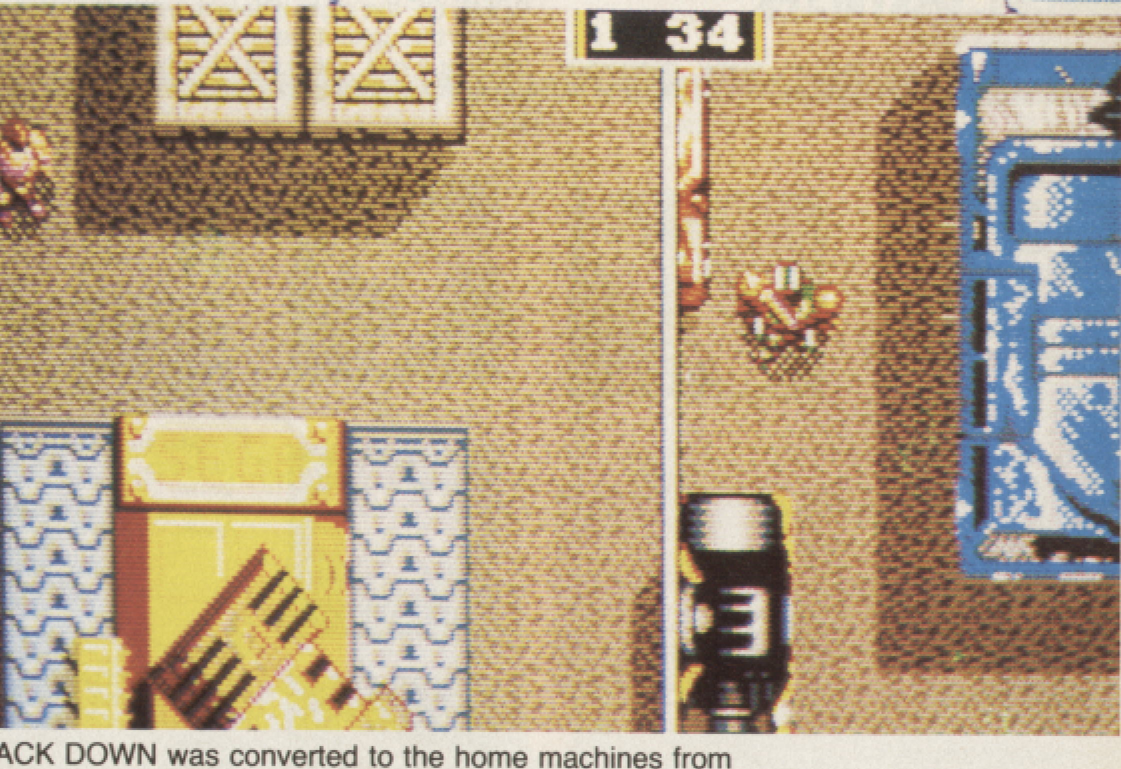
LEVEL 13



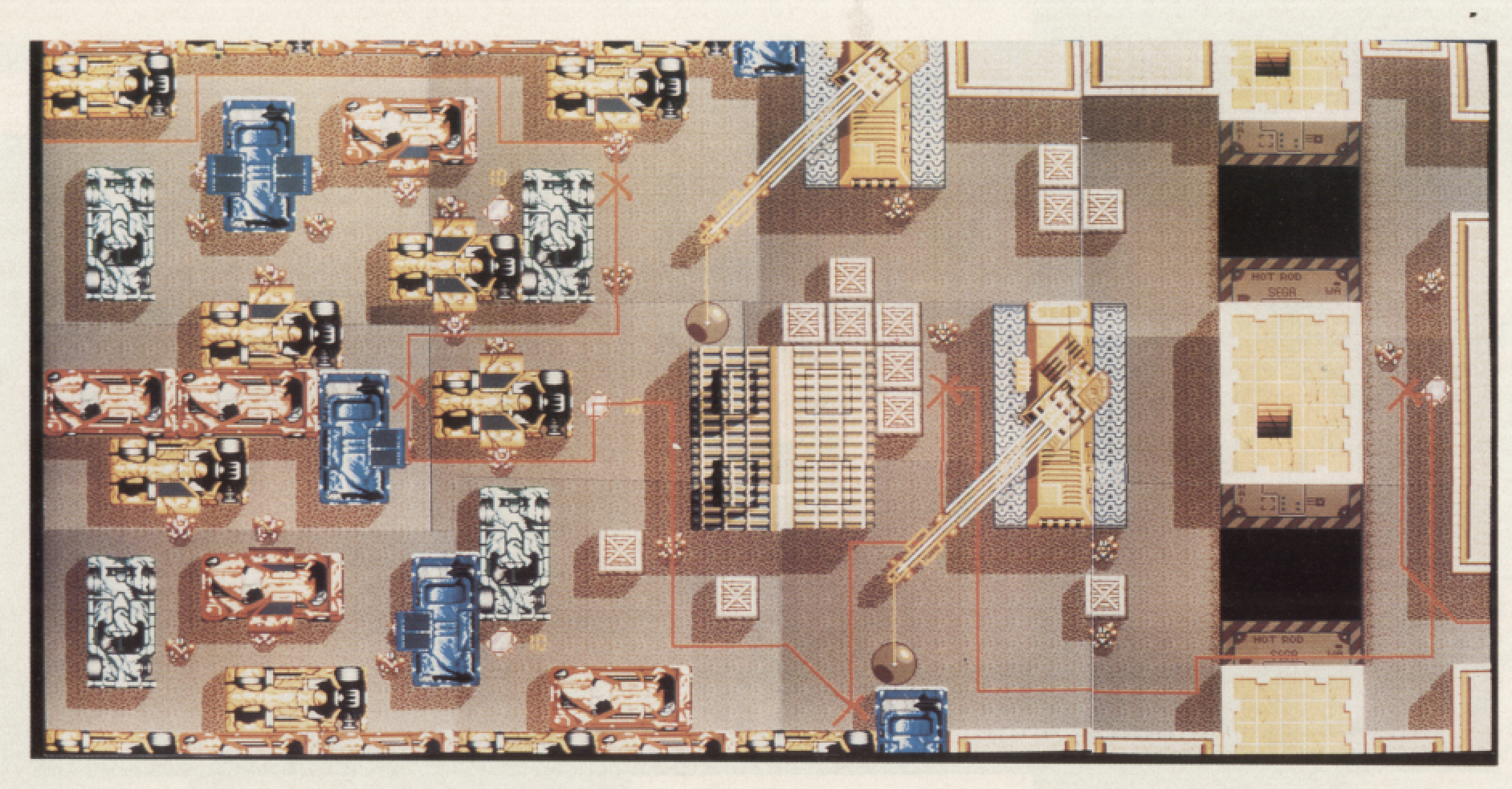
LEVEL 14



THIRSTY WORK



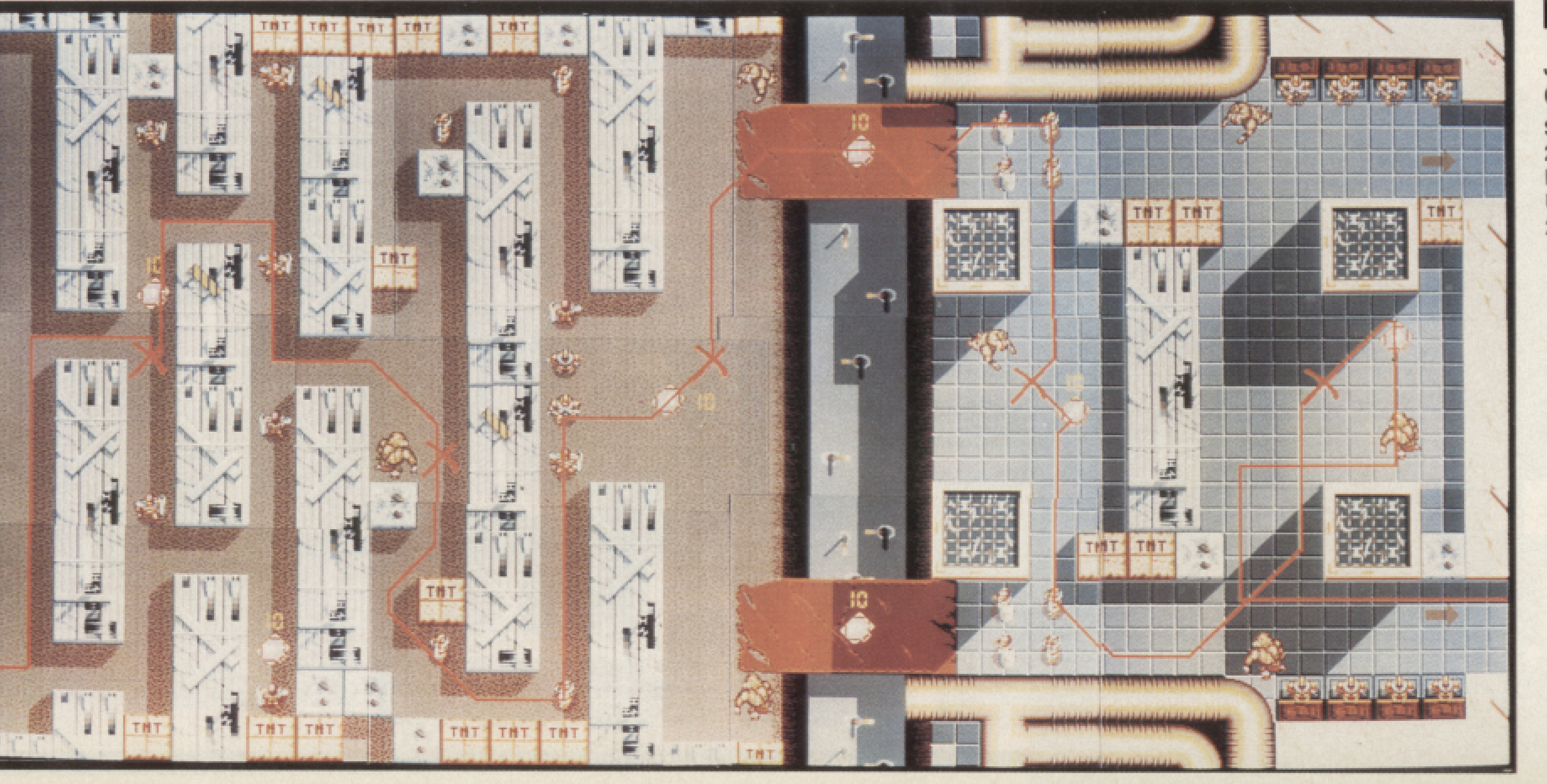
CRACK DOWN was converted to the home machines from Sega's System 24 arcade original. It's a 68000-based affair complete with specialist features aplenty, such as hardware scrolling, dedicated sprite handling and object scaling, and stereo FM digital sound. There are more bells and whistles than the 16.30 from Paddington. It weighs pretty much the same, too! Most of this bulk comes from the over-sized monitor, which can be viewed face on by two people simultaneously. Understandably, memory is in abundance, however there is one unusual difference from most other arcade machines – the best part of the game is loaded from a special hard disk drive inside the cabinet. Obviously the home systems can't compete with this technology, so converting Crack Down was very much a case of cramming a gallon into a pint pot. The crew who undertook this awesome task was Arc Developments, comprising artist Paul Walker and programmers Chris Coupe (Amiga), Tim Round (Atari ST), and Richard Underhill and Stuart Middleton (IBM PC and compatibles). The primary consideration was accurately reproducing the gameplay. This meant that something had to go – and it did. The opening sequence's animation and the short animated intermission sequences seen in the arcade original were discarded to make room, but otherwise little was lost in translation. The sheer weight of sprites caused problems, mainly the 3-5000 frames of animation. So too did the two-player aspect, with simultaneous multi-directional scrolling windows through which the playfield is viewed, and enemy intelligence and interaction with the background. The guards can't see or shoot through wall, and the characters squash up to walls, fall down holes, and walk through open doors (but obviously not closed). But perhaps the most awkward aspect of all was converting the graphics. The arcade machine has no pause mode and one couldn't be fitted, so Paul Walker was force to sketch on **DeluxePaint III** straight from the screen. The only aid Sega provided was a selection of black and white sheets of character animation. Still, you wouldn't guess from the end result.



LEVEL FIVE

THE JUNK YARD

Heavy Artillery Troopers
Heavy Artillery Trooper 2nd Unit



LEVEL SIX

JUNK YARD CONTROL

Storm Troopers 2nd Unit
Mandrills
Urban Troopers 2nd Unit

LEVEL SEVEN

THE ROOF

Jokers
Hi-Throwers

SPECIAL TACTICS

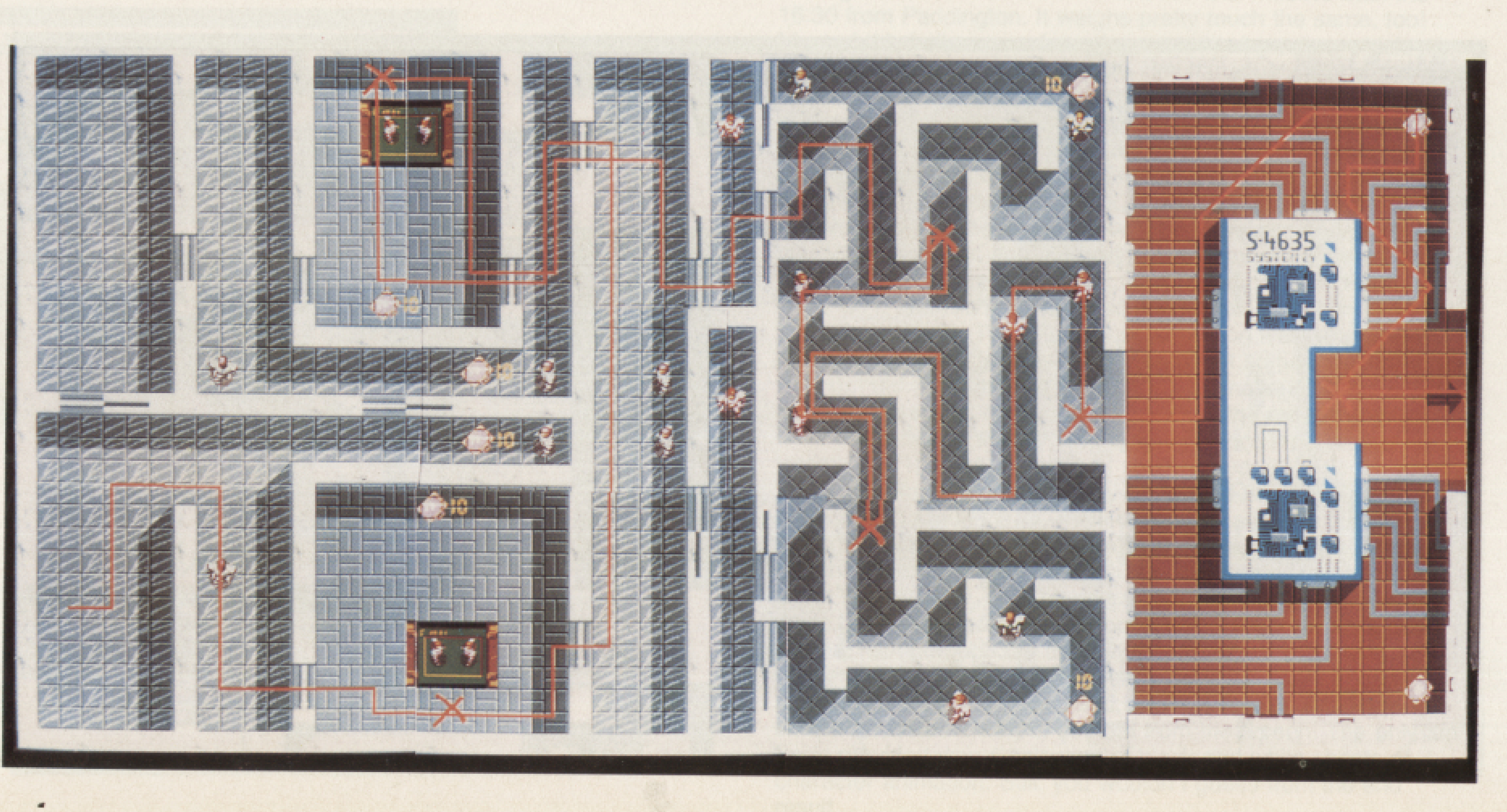
●Do not go too close to the holes or the edge of the roof as you are liable to fall to your death.

●This level provides a good opportunity to re-arm. Collect all the ammunition then wait for Time Out before collecting some more.

LEVEL EIGHT

THE COMPUTER

Security Guards 1
Security Guards 2
Security Guards 3



ZANY GOLF

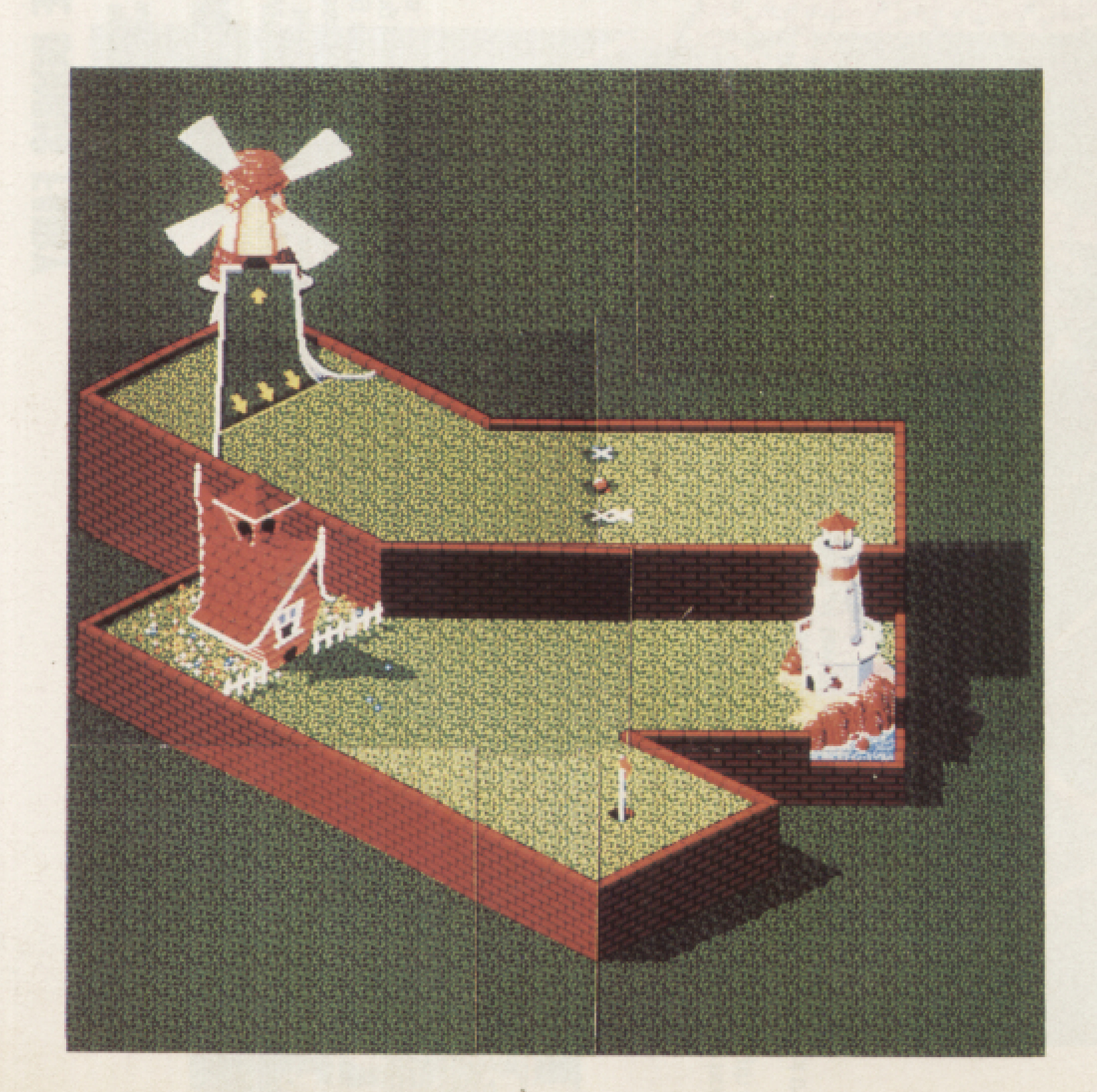
Electronic Arts

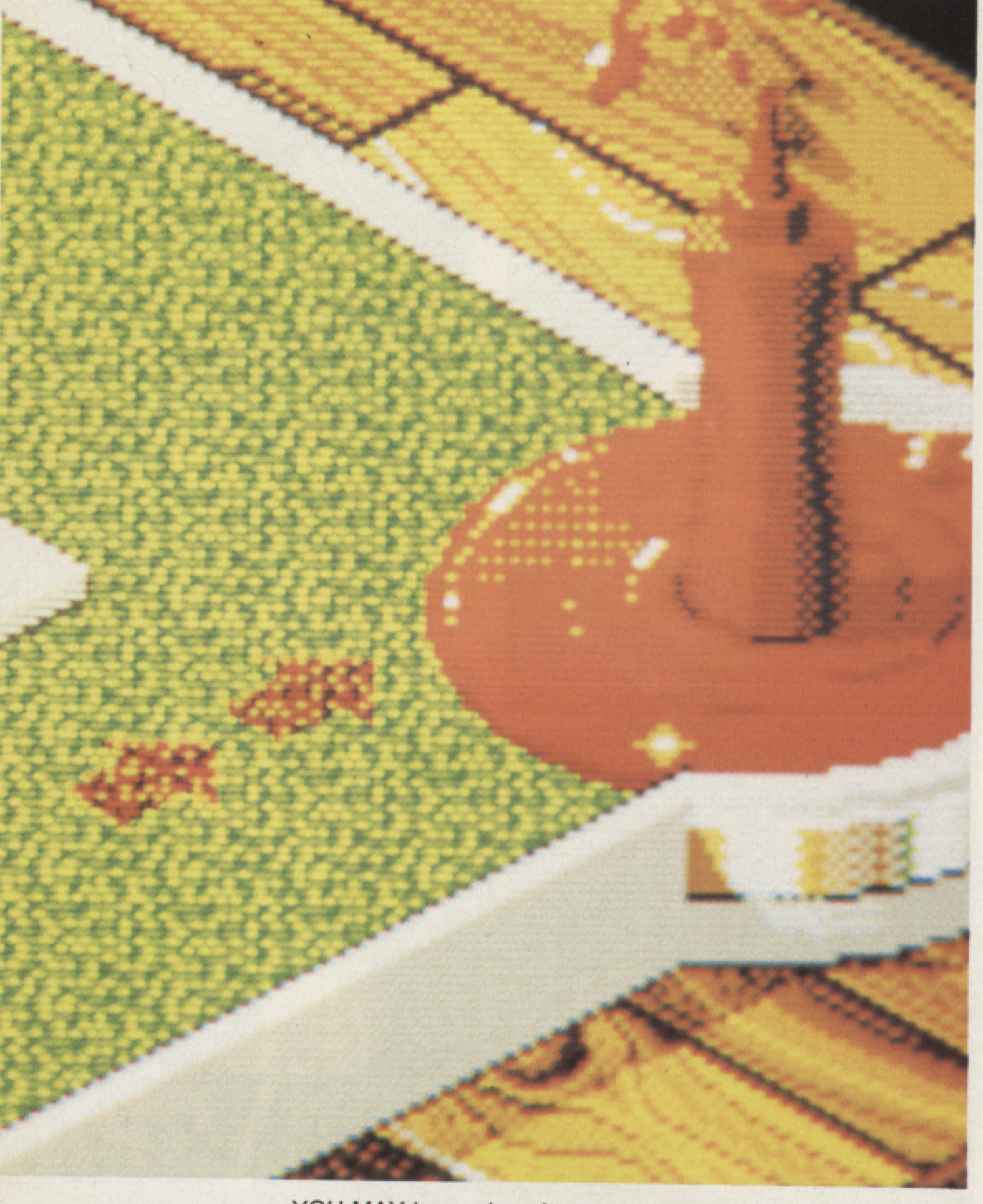


HOLE ONE

PAR 2

A SIMPLE arrangement to get the ball rolling. Try to get the ball in the windmill's hole on the first stroke. The easiest way to do this is to place the ball on the lowest tee and aim for the hole with maximum strength. Success is rewarded not only with an extra stroke but the placement of the ball in an advantageous position for a second, and hopefully final, stroke.





YOU MAY have played on some strange golf courses in your time, but never any as zany as this... 10 of the most bizarre Crazy Golf holes ever seen.

Zany Golf successfully combines the more traditional craziness of those seaside Crazy Golf courses with Pool-room skills and some more computer-relevant inspirations reminiscent of Atari Games' classic **Marble Madness**.

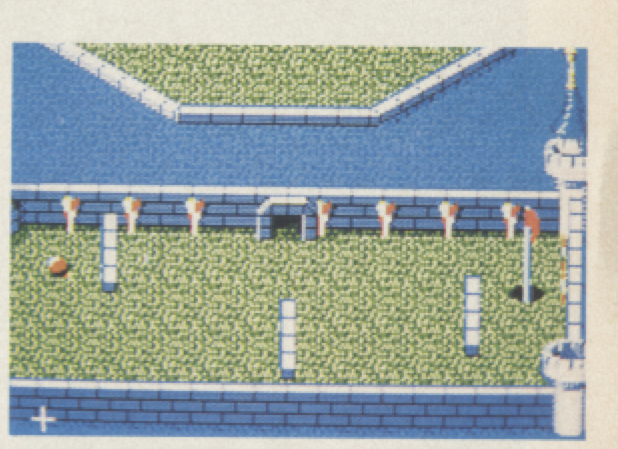
Getting the ball in the hole using as few strokes as possible is not easy, that's for sure, what with the many awkward obstacles to negotiate. And if you are to make it to the Mystery Hole on the 10th, you need all the help you can get...

THE BONUS FAIRY

She appears at random – hit her and she awards you with anything from two to five extra strokes.

TIME BONUS

COMPLETE the course within a given time limit... The time bonus is not always worth the effort. Assess whether it's worth rushing the course and using up valuable strokes in the process against taking your time and making up the strokes on later holes.





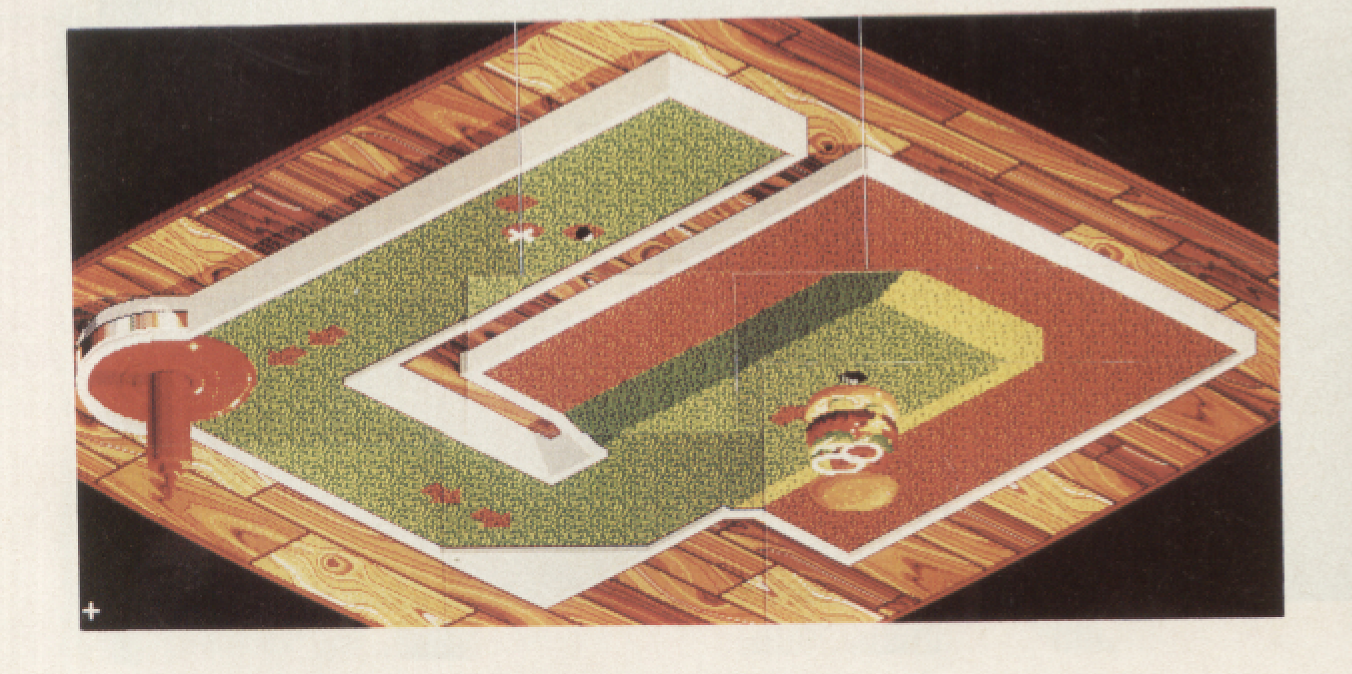
SOME GENERAL ADVICE

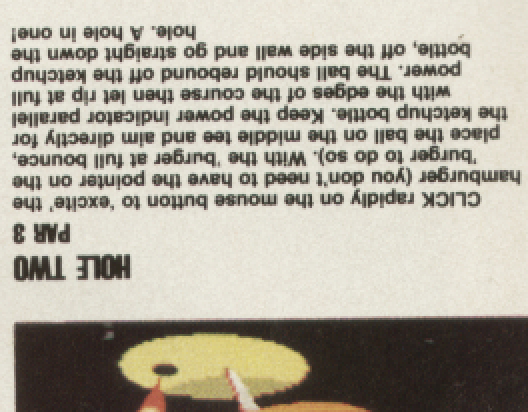
THE BALL doesn't have to be spot-on over the hole to go in. So long as it's on target and the strength of shot isn't too great, the ball will sink.

REMEMBER you can change the position of the ball at tee-off. If you don't like it, move it!

THE HOLE STORY

THE COMPLETE 'maps' for the 10 courses are provided on the pages which follow. This box represents the amount of map the player can expect to see on-screen.







HOLE TWO

PAR 3

CLICK rapidly on the mouse button to 'excite' the hamburger (you don't need to have the pointer on the 'burger to do so). With the 'burger at full bounce, place the ball on the middle tee and aim directly for the ketchup bottle. Keep the power indicator parallel with the edges of the course then let rip at full power. The ball should rebound off the ketchup bottle, off the side wall and go straight down the hole. A hole in one!

HOLE FIVE

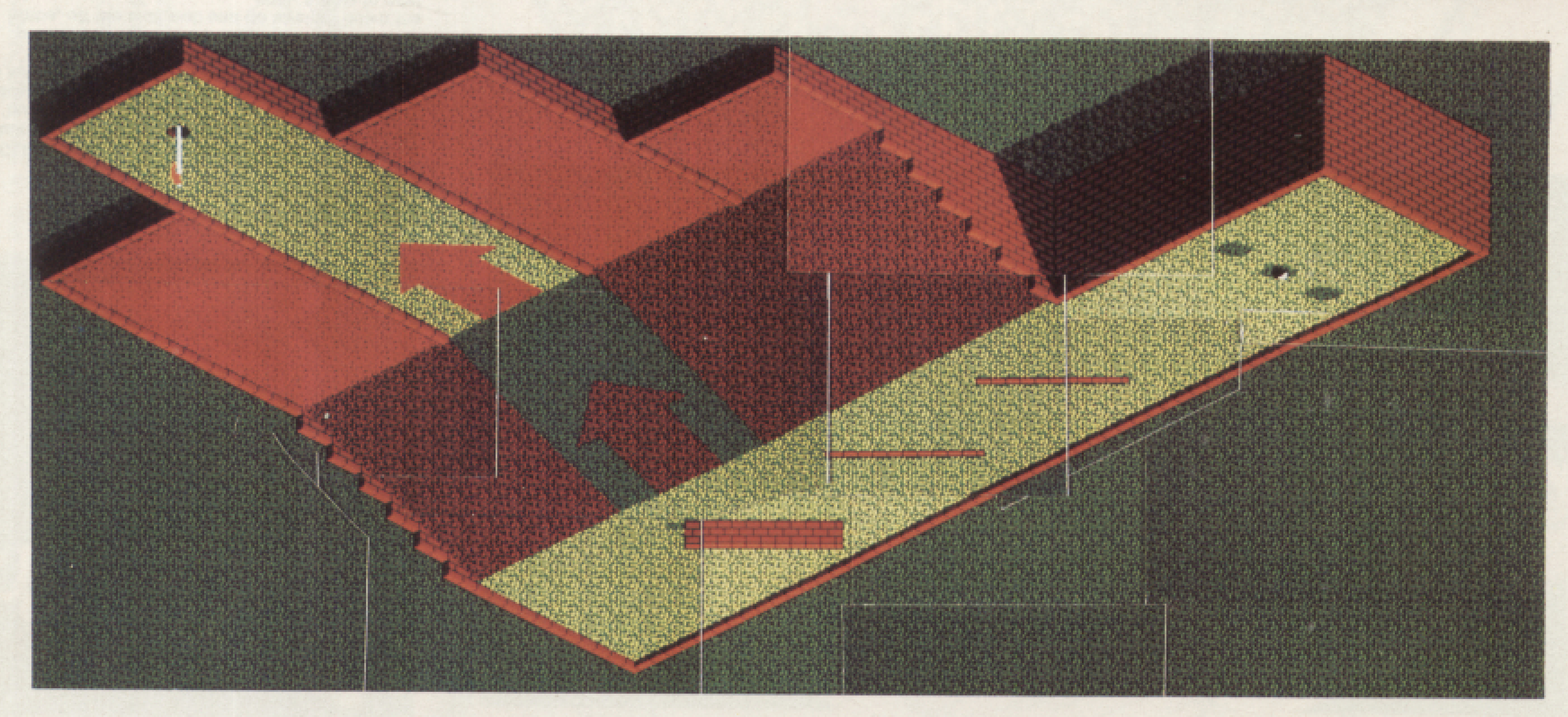
PAR 3

PLACE the ball on the middle tee and aim directly down the course with full power. When the ball reaches the second entrance, move the mouse in a circular motion to activate the fans. This should blow the ball down to the lower level and right around to the hole. Despite the many twists and turns on the course, it is possible to get a hole in one.

HOLE THREE

PAR 2

SCROLL the screen so that you can see your ball and the first two walls. Place the ball on the centre tee and set the power at approximately 75 per cent. Aim straight down the course and release the ball just as the second wall starts to go down. The ball should pass over the first two walls and rebound off the third, heading straight for the hole. Another hole in one!



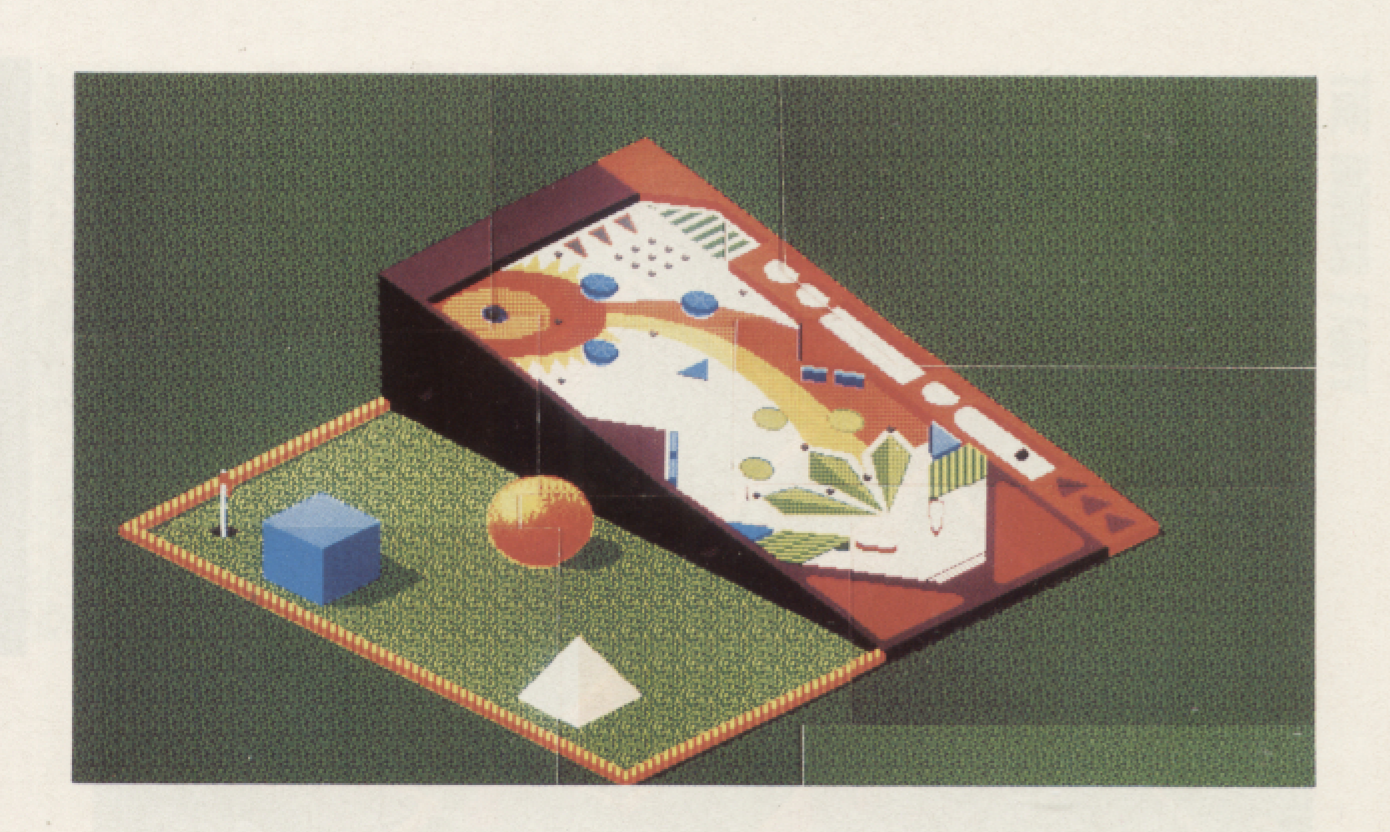


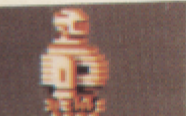
HOLE FOUR

PAR 3

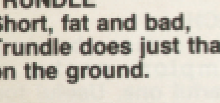
HIS ONE'S tricky! Aim directly up the table and release the ball with maximum strength. Concentrate on knocking down the two targets towards the bottom of the table – they have to be removed before the ball can enter the 'exit' hole at the top left of the table. Get the ball back up the table and leave the bumpers to flip the ball into the hole. With the ball through the 'exit', a bonus stroke is given and the ball falls down towards the hole. Sometimes the ball gets hidden by the objects on the green. If this is the case, locate the ball with a press of the spacebar. Now all you have to do is sink the ball to finish.

WARNING! Do not click the buttons too quickly when on the table! This may cause a nudge and result in the ball being deposited at the other end of the table, leaving you to waste valuable strokes negotiating the Electronic Arts logo obstacles on the green.



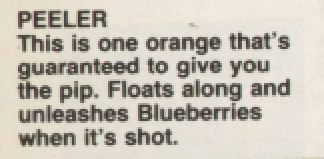


TRUNDLE
Short, fat and bad, Trundle does just that on the ground.

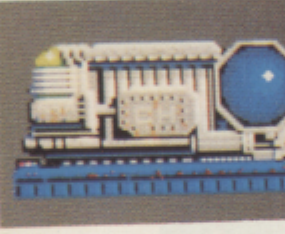


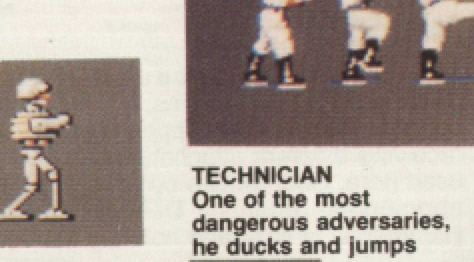


GUNNER
Walks back and forth, occasionally firing shots from his gun.



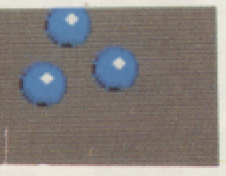
PEELER
This is one orange that's guaranteed to give you the pip. Floats along and unleashes Blueberries when it's shot.

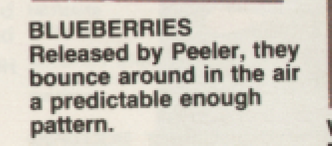




LANKY
Walks back and forth but is easily removed from the scene.





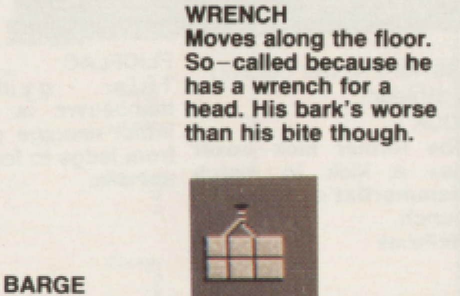


BLUEBERRIES
Released by Peeler, they bounce around in the air a predictable enough pattern.

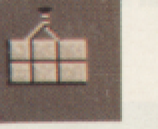
BARGE
A big, hovercraft-like cleaning device. Very bad.

TECHNICIAN
One of the most dangerous adversaries, he ducks and jumps shots fired from a distance. He also shoots back!

TITCH
He has no head but a gun instead. Titch prefers to walk.



WRENCH
Moves along the floor. So–called because he has a wrench for a head. His bark's worse than his bite though.



SPECIAL CRATE
Moves along the 'conveyor belt' and hurts when it hits.

SPARKY
Sticks to the floor and homes in on Hammerfist–Metalisis. His sparks don't hurt but he does!

SHORT STOP
A legless Lanky who moves on the floor. Best destroyed with a low punch or shot.

CRATES
Not at all dangerous, they house Collectables.

BARREL
Fall from above. Hit them before they hit you!

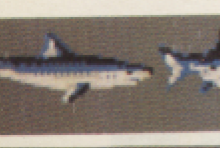
AQUATIC ADVERSARIES



FISHY
Moves predictably enough in the water.



RAY
Swims around in an obvious pattern.



JAWS
A killer shark with a bad attitude.



BOBBY
This diver carries a deadly spear gun.

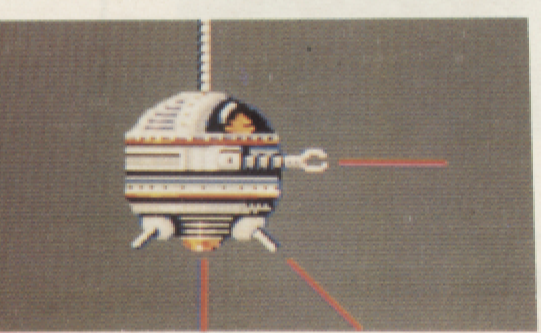
BILLY
Bobby's buddy rides an aquatic scooter and shoots missiles.



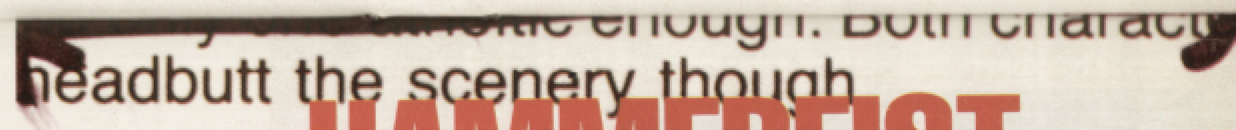
JELLO
The jellyfish stings.



SQUIRT
This squid moves in a predictable pattern and leaves a trail of ink.

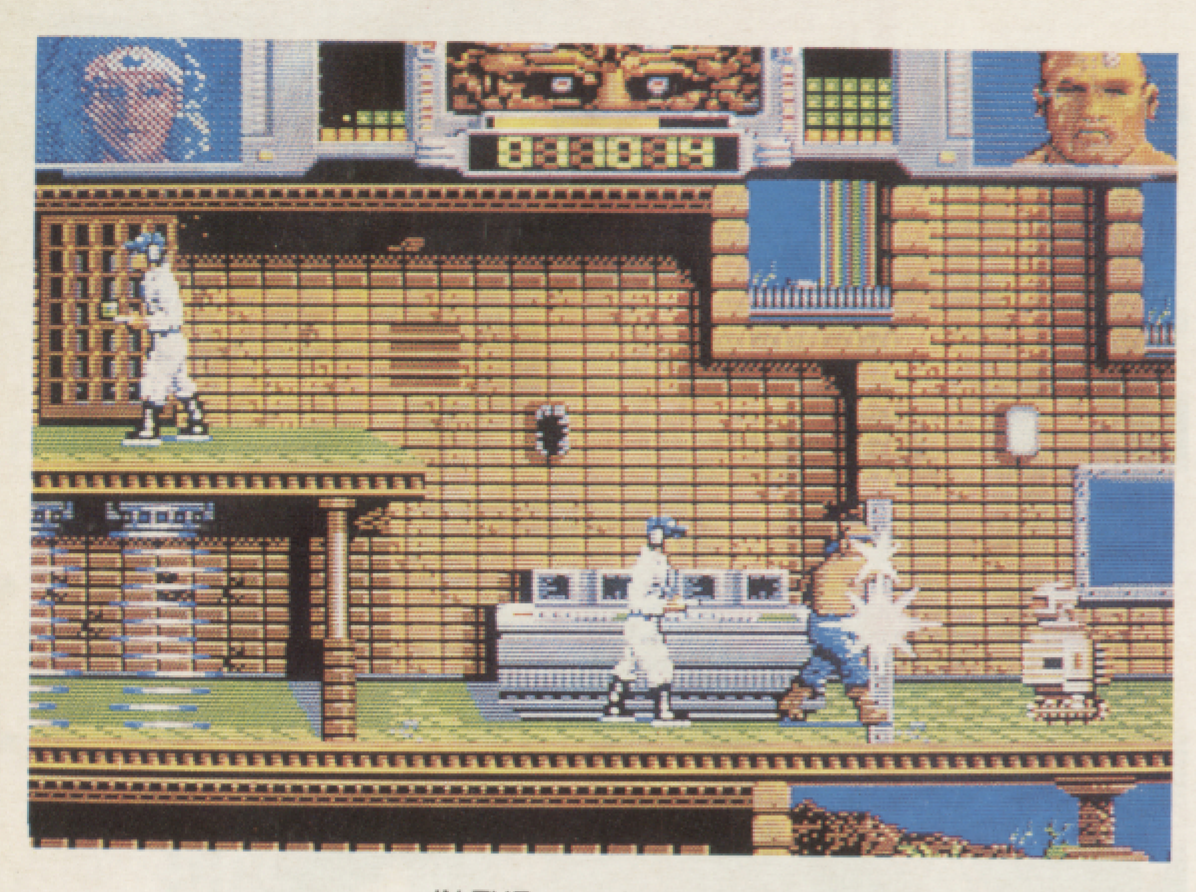


BATHYSCOPE
Very big and even badder! Watch out for his shots.



...enough. Both charac...
headbutt the scenery though

HAMMERFIST
Activision



IN THE post–holocaust society of the 22nd century the privileged minority no longer perform mundane tasks. In fact they don't even physically exist. With their consciousnesses stored in a huge computer, semi–solid futuristic holographic representations form the elite, leaving mechanised servants to do the dirty work.

The role of 'God' is played by a corporation known as Centro–Holografix. Unfortunately it's run by a corrupt core known only as The Masters, who use modified holograms to perform evil deeds. The world is their oyster.

But there's a pearl in the shell. A malfunction has caused two holographic identities to merge – Hammerfist and Metalisis are now as one. Released from their controlling influence, the duo are out to destroy The Masters and separate themselves into solid people.

But the odds are stacked against them. The Masters' minions realise the pair's intent and will do anything to stop them. This ain't gonna be no picnic...

MEET THE CHARACTERS

HAMMERFIST

SO–CALLED because he has a semi–mechanical arm as the result of a prior conflict. This special appendage is capable of receiving different attachments, but only two are used here. Both require constant fueling with the appropriate energy. Despite being strong, Hammerfist is slow and not very athletic.

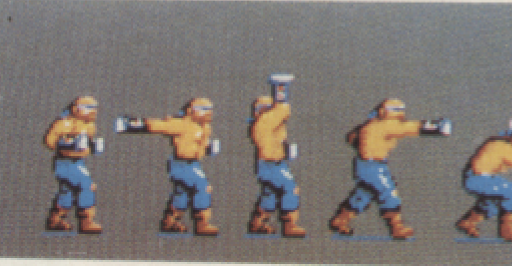
Height	6'2
Weight	300lbs

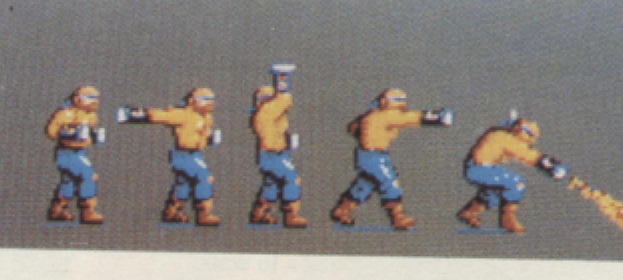
HEADBUTT
Only useful for destroying the scenery.
Hit Points N/A

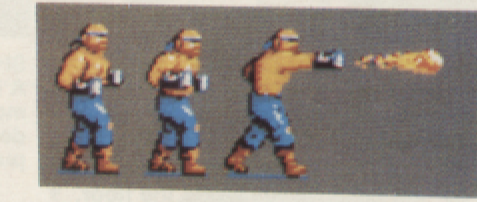
PUNCH
The former boxing champion packs a powerful one. Useful for close–quarter combat.
Hit Points 1

PISTONFIST
Vibrates at great speed and is used not only for rapid destruction of barriers but also opponents.
Hit Points 4

LASER
Packs a punch over distances. The beams bounce off the background scenery.
Hit Points 1







METALISIS

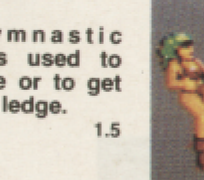
THIS lightweight lady isn't as hard as her balding buddy, but she's far more athletic.

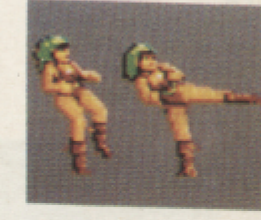
Height	6'2
Weight	140lbs

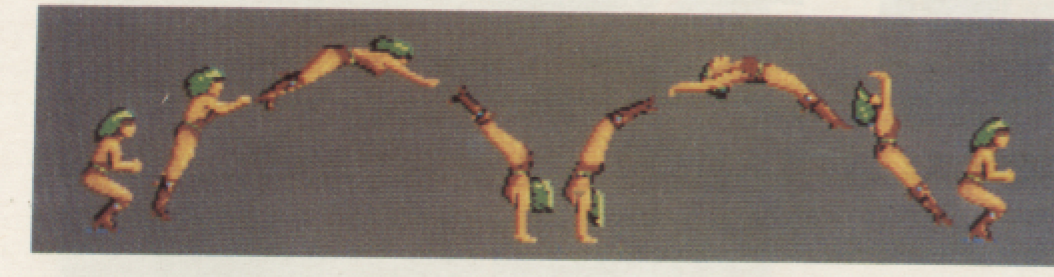
HEADBUTT
Only useful for destroying the scenery.
Hit Points N/A

KICK
The former kick–boxer has a kick to match Hammerfist's powerful punch.
Hit Points 1

FLICFLAC
This gymnastic manoeuvre is used to inflict damage or to get from ledge to ledge.
Hit Points 1.5







THE MASTERS MINIONS

THERE ARE many different types, some robotic and others aquatic. Each has different strengths and behaviour. The Hit Points, Quantity and Collectable dropped vary from screen to screen, which is why the respective details are provided with the map. Obviously those in limited numbers don't come back once removed.

FLYING DROIDS





FLICKER
He moves diagonally in the air. His claw is not dangerous.



BEADY
Moves diagonally in the air but doesn't represent much of a threat.



DISCHARGE
Also moves diagonally in the air. The electrical charge he emits is harmless.

KEY TO MAP SYMBOLS

A ALIEN CREATION POINT
S SAFE SPOT
D DOOR
R RECHARGE POINT
H HINT SUPPLIED

SCREEN ONE

FLYING DROIDS	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	1/2
Quantity	Infinite

GUNNER	
Collectable	Laser
Hit Points	5
Quantity	5

SECURITY BREACH
Destroy three or more background elements.

SCREEN TWO

TITCH	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	2
Quantity	7

TECHNICIAN	
Collectable	Super Energy
Hit Points	4
Quantity	6

GUNNER	
Collectable	Laser
Hit Points	3
Quantity	Infinite

FLYING DROIDS	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	2
Quantity	Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
Take out both the big and small monitors.

SCREEN THREE

FLYING DROIDS	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	2
Quantity	Infinite

DISCHARGE	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	2
Quantity	4

TECHNICIAN	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	2
Quantity	5

SECURITY BREACH
Destroy the whole plant. It must be shot in the correct order, so hit it wherever the projectiles come from.

SCREEN FOUR

TECHNICIAN	
Collectable	Random
Hit Points	4
Quantity	Infinite

TITCH	
Collectable	Random
Hit Points	3
Quantity	1

WRENCH	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	3
Quantity	4

SECURITY BREACH
Dispose of all monitors, the light and a few opponents.

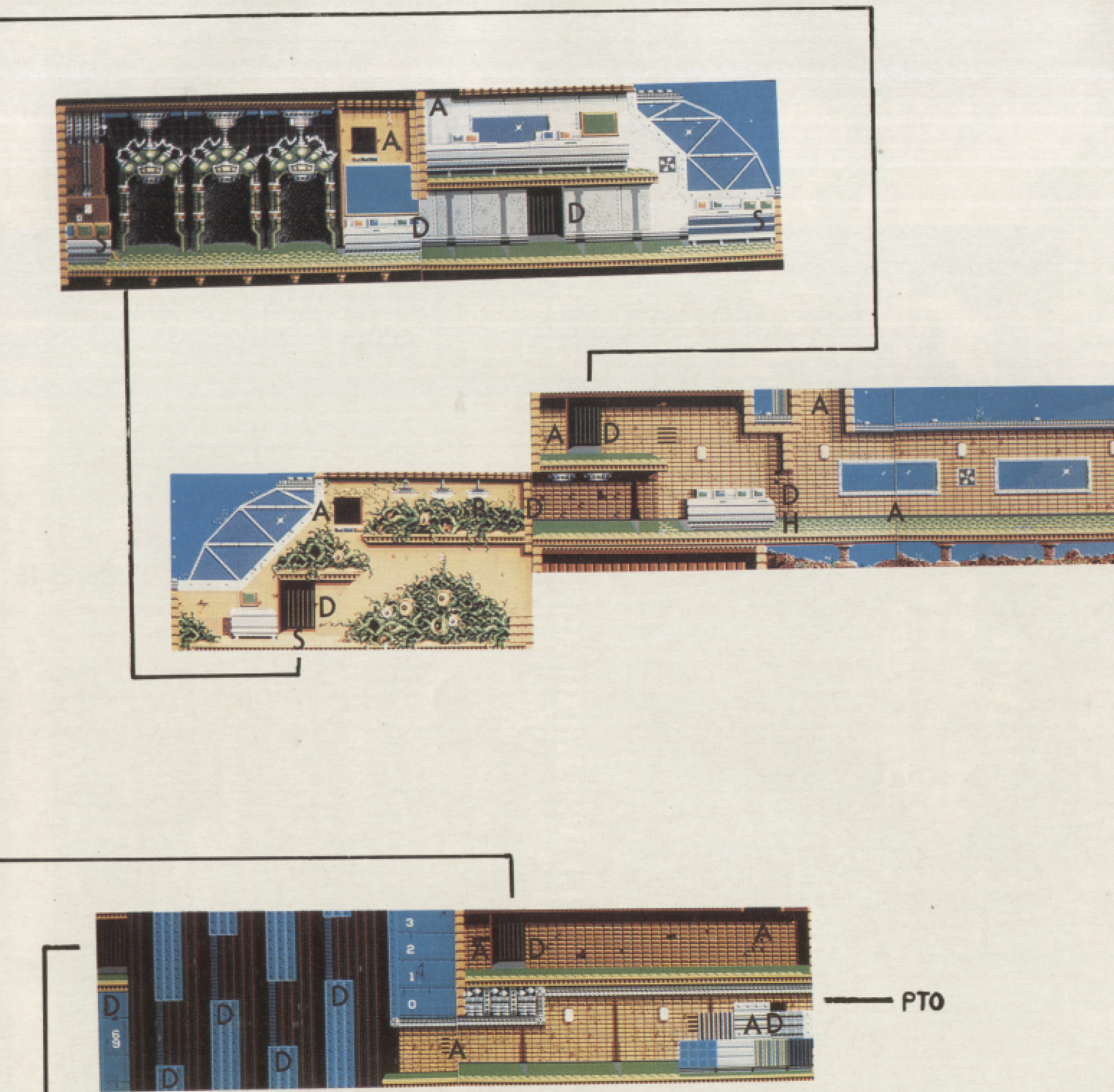
SCREEN FIVE

PEELER	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	2
Quantity	Infinite

BLUEBERRIES	
Collectable	Laser/Energy
Hit Points	1
Quantity	Infinite

SPARKY	
Collectable	Energy
Hit Points	3
Quantity	4

SECURITY BREACH
Remove the lights, the fan and the switch above the door.



SCREEN SIX

CRATES	
Collectable	Random
Hit Points	1
Quantity	Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
None. Just break down the doors.

HINT
The pistons move up with Metalisis and down with Hammerfist.

SCREEN SEVEN

TECHNICIAN	
Collectable	Random
Hit Points	6
Quantity	7

SPECIAL CRATE	
Collectable	Pistonfist
Hit Points	1
Quantity	Infinite

FLICKER	
Collectable	Super Energy
Hit Points	[illegible]
Quantity	[illegible]

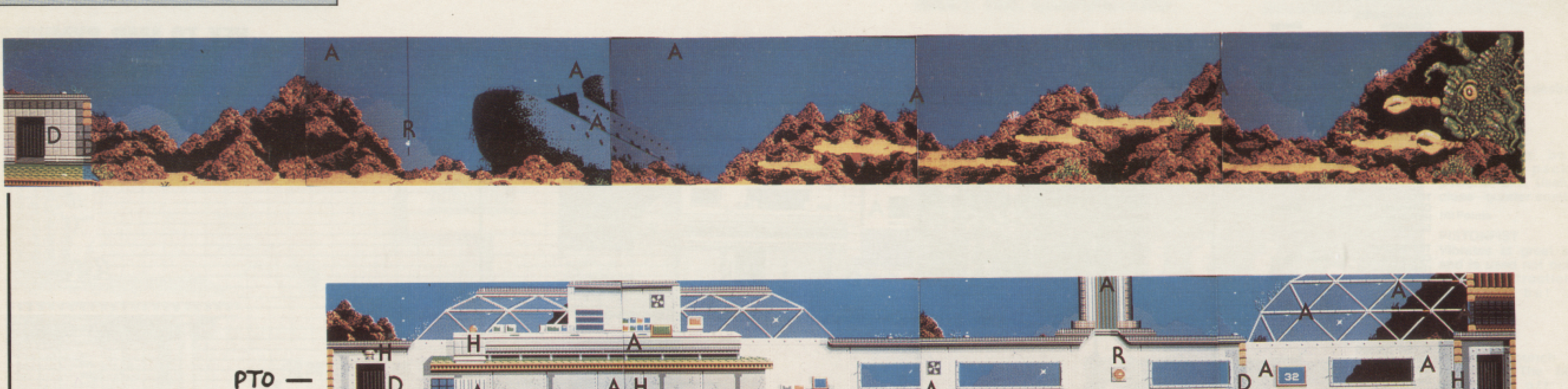
GUNNER	
Collectable	Lase[illegible]
Hit Points	[illegible]
Quantity	[illegible]

SPARKY	
Collectable	Randon[illegible]
Hit Points	[illegible]
Quantity	[illegible]

TRUNDLE	
Collectable	Pistonfis[illegible]
Hit Points	[illegible]
Quantity	Infinit[illegible]

LANKY	
Collectable	Lase[illegible]
Hit Points	[illegible]
Quantity	[illegible]

SECURITY BREACH
None. Destroy the crates to the rig[illegible] of the screen to reveal a door.



PTO —

SCREEN EIGHT

TECHNICIAN
Collectable Random
Hit Points 6
Quantity 4

BEADY 1
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity 4

BEADY 2
Collectable Piston Fist
Hit Points 1
Quantity Infinite

BEADY 3
Collectable Random
Hit Points 1
Quantity 4

FLICKER
Collectable Random
Hit Points 1
Quantity 6

SECURITY BREACH
Break the monitor and kill plenty of opponents.

HINT
Stand beneath the side door and use the Pistonfist.

SCREEN NINE

BARGE
Cannot be destroyed here.

FLICKER 1
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity Infinite

FLICKER 2
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity 6

LANKY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
None. Use either the Laser or FlicFlac to push the Barge off the screen.

SCREEN 10

BEADY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 4

DISCHARGE
Collectable Laser
Hit Points 2
Quantity 4

LANKY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity 1

BARGE
Collectable Lasers
Hit Points 18
Quantity 1

TECHNICIAN
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

GUNNER
Collectable Laser
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
None.

HINT
Jam the Barge against the box and use the Pistonfist.

SCREEN 11

TECHNICIAN (TOP)
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

TECHNICIAN (LOWER)
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 4

LANKY
Collectable Energy
Hit Points 2
Quantity 1

DISCHARGE
Collectable Laser
Hit Points 4
Quantity 3

WRENCH
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 1

GUNNER
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
Destroy the monitors, crates, the switch at the top and the laser at the door.

HINT
To destroy the door – mounted laser, stand beneath it when it's not active. Duck when it activates and fire your Laser at it when it's no longer active.

SCREEN 12

FISHY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 4/8

RAY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 4

JAWS
Collectable Laser/Random
Hit Points 6/3
Quantity 4/2

BOBBY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 3

SECURITY BREACH
None.

SCREEN 13

BARREL
Collectable Laser
Hit Points 1
Quantity Infinite

FISHY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3/2
Quantity Infinite

RAY
Collectable Pistonfist
Hit Points 3/2
Quantity Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
None.

SCREEN 14

BATHYSCOPE
Collectable Energy
Hit Points 7
Quantity Infinite

SQUIRT
Collectable Random
Hit Points 4
Quantity 4

RAY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity 4

FISHY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 2
Quantity Infinite

BILLY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 2

SECURITY BREACH
None. Destroy the Barrels for a safer passage.

SCREEN 15

SQUIRT
Collectable Random
Hit Points 1
Quantity 2

FISHY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

RAY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

JAWS
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 4

BOBBY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 2

BILLY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 2

SECURITY BREACH
None. Destroy the Barrels for a safer passage.

SCREEN 16

FISHY
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 4

RAY 1
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 3

RAY 2
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity Infinite

JAWS
Collectable Random
Hit Points 3
Quantity 3

SQUIRT
Collectable Random
Hit Points 1/1
Quantity 1/Infinite

SECURITY BREACH
None. Use the Laser to kill the Sea Monster in the required order.

STAGE ONE
Top Claw

STAGE TWO
Bottom Claw

STAGE THREE
Mouth

STAGE FOUR
Eye

HINT
To destroy Eye, jump onto the small ledge and fire from there. To jump onto small ledge, position Metalisis behind the first '3D' rock and then perform a FlicFlac. Now transform into Hammerfist and let rip. Try destroying the existing opponents before going onto the next Stage of destruction as each death results in the generation of new opponents.

FALCON
THE MISSION DISKS: VOLUME 2
Spectrum HoloByte And Mirrorsoft

ATARI ST

PRICE	£19.99
OUT	August
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	89%
VALUE	81%

OVERALL 88%

AMIGA

PRICE	£19.99
OUT	August

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
N/A

Falcon
The Mission Disks: Volume 2

To Falcon, a son: Mirrorsoft's Mission Disk 2. Assisting midwife: Kati Hamza.

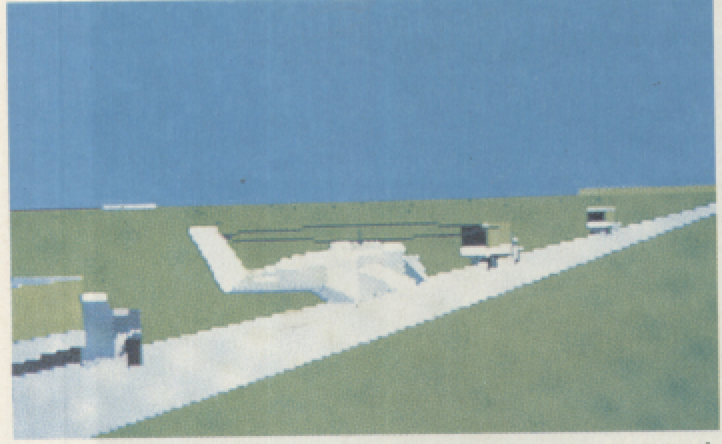
FALCON is widely regarded as the definitive F-16 flight simulation, with more awards under its belt than most F-16 pilots have had hot dinners. It's also essentially an offensive game and like **Mission Disk 1**, concentrates heavily on air-to-ground missions.

Mission Disk 2 gives you a much larger objective: maintaining ground superiority on the battlefield. Two directives are imperative in achieving this: bombing supply lines in enemy territory and defending your own bases against attacking MiGs.

And that means zooming through the sky at Mach 2, your finger on the trigger and your eyes glued on to the HUDs, keeping the enemy at bay, defending your own quadrants and performing 12 separate bombing missions in a row. It's not easy – but then it's not meant to be.

FORGET MiGs that just stick to defending their own supply lines. In this game the enemy is out to attack, not just defend. Mission 12 culminates in an all-out, do or die MiG27 attack on your home base but at any time you can find yourself face to face with up to five hostile planes at once – not just MiGs and Hinds but for the first time ever, helicopters as well.

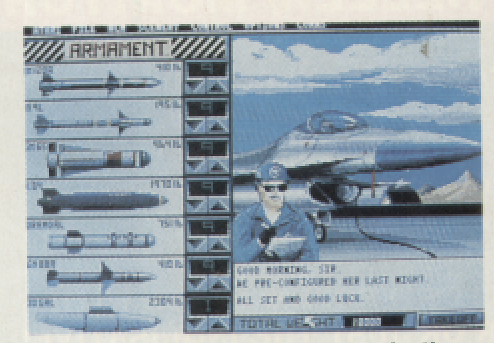
INTERNAL and external views remain much as they were in Falcon, so you can watch the action from practically every conceivable angle, including straight out of the back of your head. There's just one addition – a moving track view of your plane in flight.



THE HEART of the matter. The more tanks and trucks you manage to protect, the stronger your army becomes. Let them get shot and your whole campaign's a loss.

"Mission Disk 2 is more than just another set of 12 gung ho experiences to notch up – it endows Falcon with a whole new flying dimension."

MISSIONS are a mixture of offensive and defensive action: anything from exploding pontoon bridges and supply convoys to intercepting attacking MiGs and Hinds. They can be attempted in any order but as the outcome of one mission may affect your chances in the next, it's best to stick to the order supplied. Select the new extra aircraft option for added difficulty: the enemy automatically sends out a second set of aircraft.



MUCH of the original weapon selection – Durandal, Maverick and Sidewinder – remains but there are two strategically important changes: Beyond Visual Range and Radar Seeking missiles. These extra bits of kit are designed to pick off the enemy long before they reach you. Use them correctly and they should provide you with a bit of added breathing space.

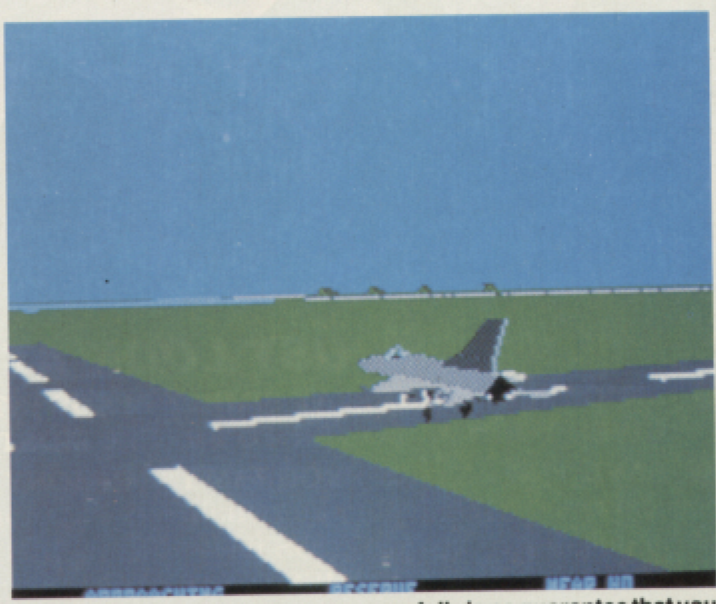
THREE MEN IN A ROWAN BOAT

ROD HYDE, Rowan Software's biggest cheese, explains what the team tried to achieve with this latest Falcon installment: "We'd introduced some elements of air-to-air combat in Mission Disk 1 but we wanted to improve on it so we introduced the concept of the enemy going for their own targets in your territory. That made the whole war situation much more realistic."

Many enjoyed Falcon primarily for the air-to-ground missions (because they are easier) – however, Rowan didn't want to sacrifice them in the process. The obvious solution was to combine the two.

Essentially Rod describes it as "Falcon in reverse" – this time you defend yourself against the MiGs instead of the other way around. That means it's vital to make full use of your sophisticated weaponry and try to take out the enemy before they ever get into close range – at close range you have more chance of losing.

Mission Disk 2 has taken three men – David Whiteside, Mark Shaw (graphic artist) and Rod Hyde himself – about five months to complete and some of the ideas, if not the actual code, were developed in tandem with Flight Of The Intruder. The MiGs, for example, have a similarly intelligent defending role in both.



COMPLETING all 12 missions successfully is no guarantee that you win. You only get a slap on the back and the medal of honour if you achieve the ground superiority you set out to do – and that's regardless of whether you carry out all the missions or not.

ST Mission Disk 2 is more than just another set of 12 gung ho experiences to notch up – it endows Falcon with a whole new flying dimension. The secret is the two-old objective. Having to concentrate on defence as well as attack means that adopting an overall strategy is far more effective than simply rushing out and bombing the enemy. The new Beyond Visual Range weapons give far more choice as to how your tactics are arranged. Not only is this a more realistic simulation of a war situation – it also provides that extra bit of depth. Whether you play for action (the missions) or for the overall strategy (the medal) is purely a matter of personal choice. Falcon's second son looks impressive, sounds pretty much like its dad and flies like a dream. Meaty fodder for serious Falcon followers.

PC MS-DOS Falcon is very much the direct concern of Spectrum HoloByte in the USA. So far it hasn't used the Mission Disk approach, concentrating instead on producing updated versions of the original game. Version 3.0 is rumoured to be coming out later this year with something akin to a mission disk featuring F18s bolted on to the main game. Watch out for imports.

A Amiga mission disks are reaching the last stages of production at this very moment and should be raring to go by August. Cosmetically, there's nothing to distinguish it from what's seen here and what's come before.

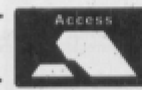
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Projectyle

What do you get when you cross a cat, a moose and a sledgehammer with Electronic Arts? Kati Hamza hurls herself into the future to find out.

THE FUTURE. A time when your descendants are roasting in tropical Clacton temperatures, making monthly payments to their cryogenic freezing plan and building theme parks in derelict nuclear power plants. As for the national sport, **Projectyle** – a form of soccer on jet-disks – is the biggest thing since irradiated bread.

It's played by teams from all over the universe on a distinctive five-zone, cross-shaped pitch: there are league competitions, sudden death play-offs and one-off friendlies. Surfaces vary, teams have different skills and up to eight players can participate (with three in any one game). The net result is the same: three sets of fast and furious action, plenty of goals and a game of three halves at the end of the day.

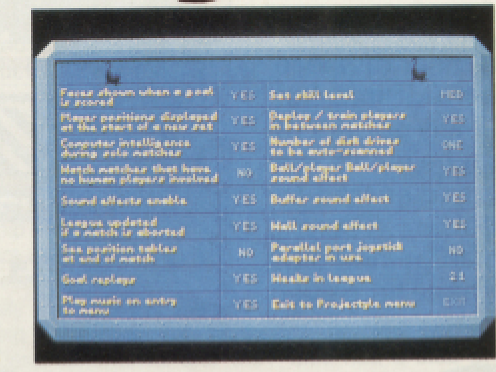


IN ADDITION to The Eldritch Cats, the default team, there are eight different clubs to choose from. Each has its own definitive style of play and a unique playing surface – anything from rubbery jelly to ice.

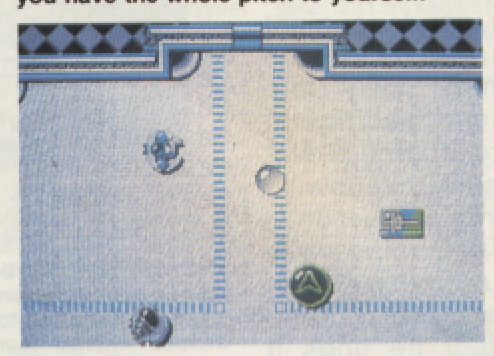
ST Watch someone else play a game of Projectyle and it doesn't look like much more than a glorified version of air hockey with bells and whistles attached. It's only when you play for yourself that you appreciate its sheer speed, excitement and subtlety. It takes no time at all to get the hang of it (it's fairly easy to win your first match if you choose the right team) yet there's plenty of scope for employing complex tactics later on. Design is the key. The Frantic Zone, different surfaces, player ability, collectables and computer intelligence (the opposition gangs up on you if you do too well) guarantee a different experience every time. Presentation is exceptionally slick throughout and matched by the quality of the graphics: optional replays, practice option, super-smooth parallax scrolling (especially impressive on an ST) and animated pitch surfaces – there's even a choice of eight different introductory tunes. You'd be crazy to miss it.

A In terms of gameplay there isn't a cat's whisker of a difference between the ST and Amiga versions. Sound-wise however, there's one variation – any of the eight tunes can be switched on to play during a match.

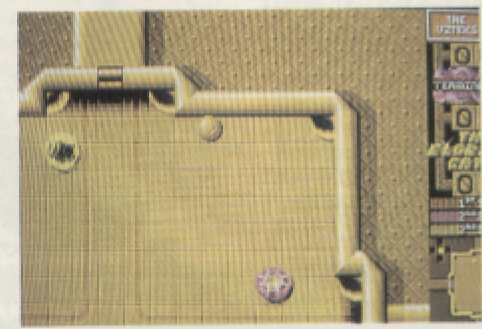
PC Doom, gloom and general catastrophe for Projectyle-loving PC poppers – no version is planned at present. There is just a glimmer of hope. If the ST and Amiga versions do well, Electronic Arts may consider converting.



OPTIONS are preset so that anyone can plunge straight into a solo game. Less itchy-fingered joystick jugglers may prefer to enter the options screen to specify a game's parameters. Almost everything can be altered here, from specific on-screen animation which may slow the screen down a tad on less powerful machines, right through to authentic action replays and the training option. If you just want a solo practice, play on your own and switch off the computer intelligence: your opponents stand still and you have the whole pitch to yourself.

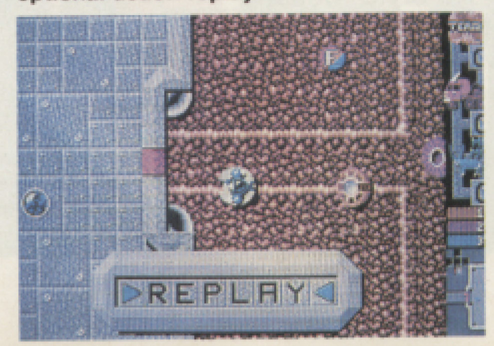


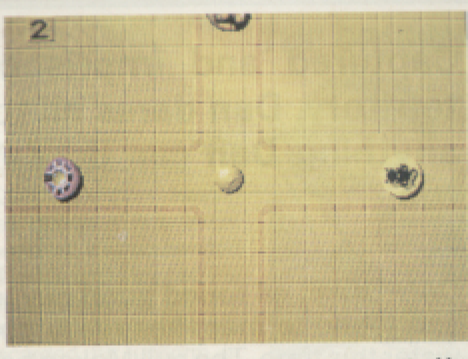
COLLECTABLES come in two handy sizes. Triangles only affect the collector while squares affect the whole pitch. Effects include plus or minus slide factor, free kicks, Dosh, extra stamina and chip shots. Teleports are a one-way ticket to the Frantic Zone.



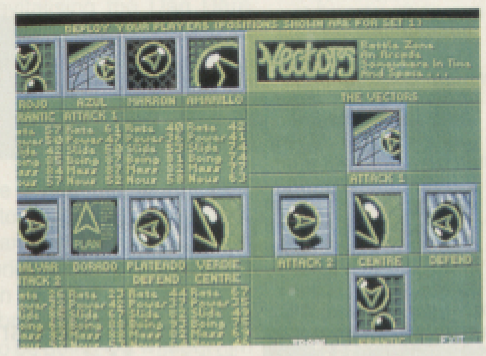
SKILLFUL players have more chance of scoring in the Frantic Zone than anywhere else – it's also the one area where you're most likely to be scored against. Skill, speed and strength are useful abilities for any player stationed here.

THERE'S more than one way to skin an Eldritch Cat. You can play a defensive game or opt for all-out aggression – it all depends on the relative skills of everyone else on the pitch. It pays to make use of the walls, hold back occasionally at bully off and exploit collectables to the full. Proud shooters can always watch their skills again on the optional action replay.

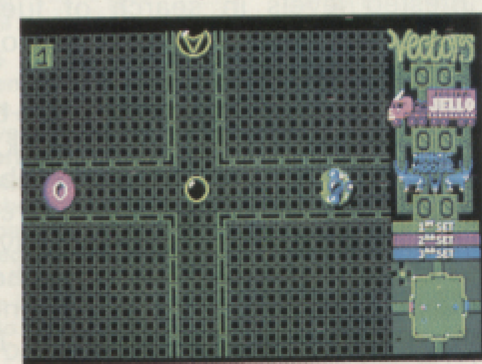




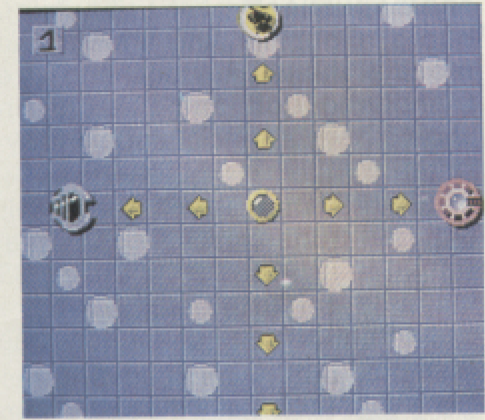
PITCHES consist of five zones connected by inter-section tunnels: the central section, three goal areas and the Frantic Zone. One player per team is positioned in each and the teams' defence zones rotate after each set. The Frantic Zone, which is always in the same position, is a combined defensive and offensive area containing three goalmouths – one for each team.



FROM a squad of eight players you choose your five-man team and position them into zones. In addition to statistics on goals scored and matches played, each squad member has a set of personal characteristics ranging from speed (Rate) through to bounce (Boing). In training mode these abilities can be reduced or improved for a price (extra Dosh icons are picked up in-game). The value of a particular skill depends on the pitch: extra Boing is obviously more valuable on a sluggish surface than on jelly.



PITCH qualities often reflect the home team's skill. The Devils' pitch is slow so the Devils have added speed. The Manic Moose, on the other hand, play on ice, so speed isn't a premium for them. Learning the properties of each surface is a vital consideration if you train your team to win.



BALLS can only withstand so much pressure. Three over-enthusiastic players will cause it to burst, in which case all three bully off again from that zone. Cleverly implemented ball-bursting is a tactic in itself. When defending your goal, it may give you a better chance of getting the projectyle out of that zone.

PROJECTYLE
Electronic Arts

ATARI ST

PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	87%
PLAYABILITY	88%
VALUE	80%

OVERALL

85%

AMIGA

PRICE	£24.99
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TBA

"It's only when you play for yourself that you appreciate its sheer speed, excitement and subtlety."

DAN DARE III THE ESCAPE
Virgin Games

ATARI ST

PRICE	£19.99
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GRAPHICS	63%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	64%
VALUE	60%

OVERALL 61%

AMIGA

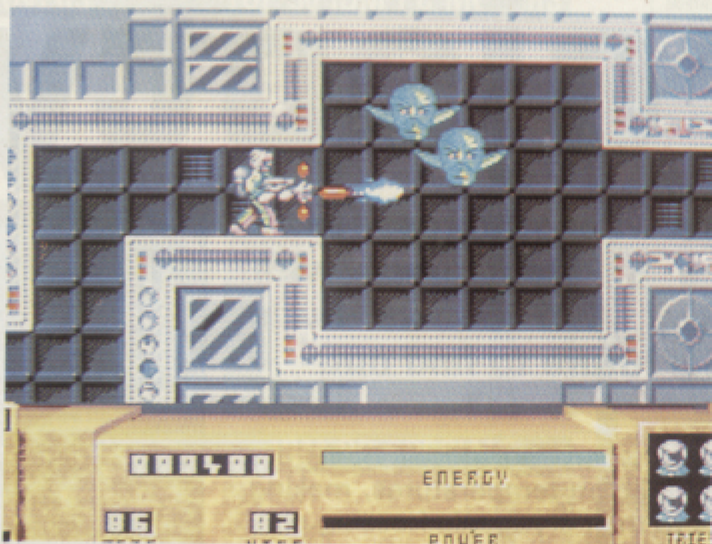
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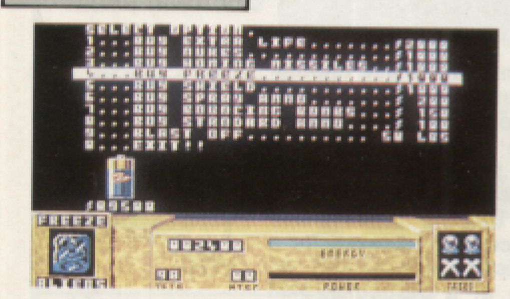
Captured and imprisoned in Virgin territory, Dan dares all to escape. And anything Dan can do Kati Hamza can too.

DAN DARE, all round good guy, defender of space and friend to men, has really got himself into hot water this time. The evil Mekon has finally got sick of tyrannising a bunch of Treens – what he wants is a servile humanoid army genetically engineered to carry out his every wild and wicked whim. There's just one problem – he needs a human guinea pig. Who better than the most decent, humane hero ever to start the genetic milkshake?



THE GENETIC litter of the Mekon's previous DNA experiments floats forlornly about the satellite and its got a grudge against the human race. The evil mutants fire energy-draining pellets at our intrepid astronaut. At first a jetpack, a pulse plasma rifle and a spacesuit are the only things between Colonel Dare and them.

Dan Dare III
The Escape



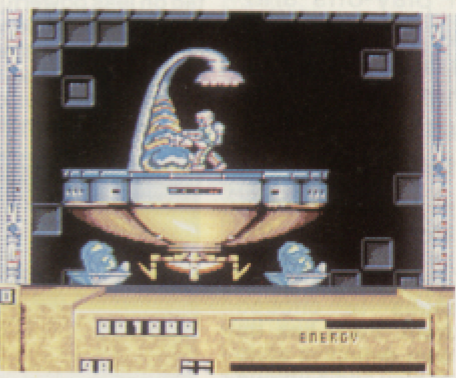
In typically sneaky style, the manic Mekontan sends a giant satellite to earth and before he knows what's hit him, 'Lucky' Dare is tied up on board and heading into space. Is our hero doomed? Not likely. A quick knuckle sandwich sorts out his guards and seconds later Dan the man's planning a way to escape. There's a handy space shuttle but it's out of gas, so Dan Dare has to negotiate five mutant-infested levels in search of fuel. If he finds it mankind's off the hook: if he doesn't it's Mekon domination time.

> "Jetting around the satellite, zapping mutants and collecting fuel isn't breaking new ground but it is good clean fun."

ST Surprisingly for a game based on a comic renowned for its artwork, **Dan Dare III** falls down on the most obvious essential: graphics. Neither the characteristics of Dan, the Mekon or the mutants have been exploited as much as you might expect. Where's the brilliant green of the Mekon's head, the genetic weirdness of the mutants or the distinctive Dan Dare look? Gameplay is a tad more satisfying – jetting around the satellite, zapping mutants and collecting fuel isn't breaking new ground but it is good clean fun – for a while. Once you play your way through five levels of the same old stuff you may find yourself wishing that a bit more had been made of the switches, the mazes and the puzzle element. Still, while jaded 'Old School' pupils might not find enough substance for their money, the slick front end presentation, user-friendly controls and suitably sinister soundtrack should have a special appeal for younger Dan Dare fans.

A Dan's charm is universal, so his adventure runs exactly the same way on the Amiga as it does on the ST. The minor enhancements in the graphics and sound departments come absolutely free.

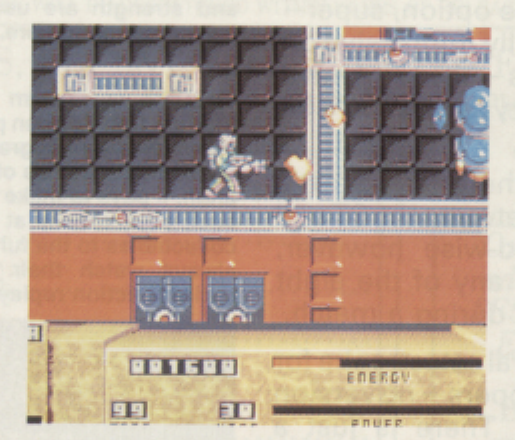
PC Dan Dare's adventures PC-style boast essentially the same gameplay in glorious Tandy, CGA and EGA.



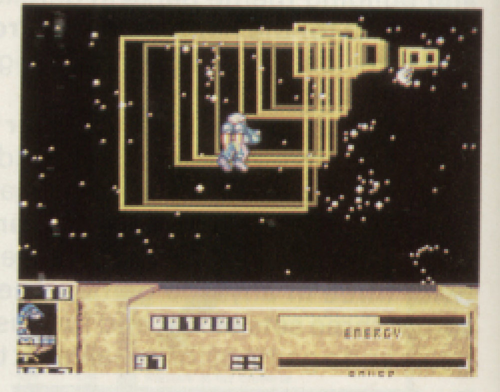
THE ADVENTURE begins near the store-room's computer and a mere flick of the joystick allows Dan to log on. Extra weapons include Nukes (smart bombs), bounce bombs, spray shot, extra plasma units and bonus lives. Dan shops till he runs out of cash or reaches maximum supply.



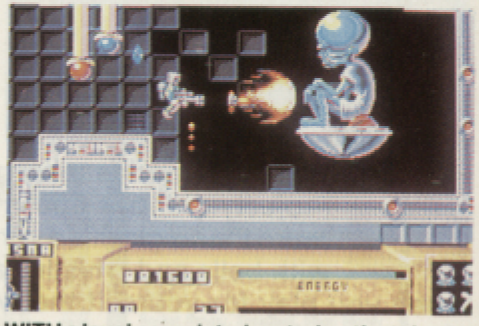
TELEPORTATION, Mekon-style. To survive the inter-level warp, Dan has to stay inside the rapidly scrolling squares. Smashing against the sides too often eats up energy and could even lead to the unthinkable – Dan's death.



THANKS to the Mekon's machinations, exits may be blocked and essential doors locked. Flick the appropriate switch to thwart the dastard's tricks.



CRAZY he may be but stupid he ain't. It doesn't take long for the Mekon to suss Dan's plans and warp to where he's at – usually as close to the fuel pod as possible. Several blasts of hefty fire are enough to gain an inter-level pass and send the mighty Mekon running for cover. Not that he stays out of action for long. By the time you leg it to the next stage, cabbage-head is back.



WITH a level completed, entering the teleport warp to the next one sets off a self-destruct. Make sure you collect the vital fuel can before you go. If you forget it's blasted to smithereens in the resulting explosion and you just have to quit and restart.

HOW DAN DARED

FOR A COMIC, the original Eagle was put together in an unusually innovative way. Instead of relying on a one-man one-page system Frank Hampson involved everyone in a studio style of production. The Eagle headquarters, first in Southport, then in London, were run more like an animation studio than a typical comic.

For Hampson, quality and realism were always paramount. To this end, he kept a whole library of hardware and character data, insisted on having models of weapons, rockets, even whole alien landscapes specially built and arranged for space suits to be made up so that members of the team could pose for the frames. All the human characters were based on people Hampson knew: Sir Hubert was his father and his own son Peter was the model for Dan's young protegee, 'Flamer' Spry. If an artist was unsure of a character's details all he had to was look up a photograph.

In-house production was a three-step operation.

WHO DARES WINS

ON THE 14th April 1990, one of the greatest heroes this world has ever known celebrated his 40th birthday. Dan Dare, clean-shaven pilot of the future and staunch defender of the earth, has been saving the world from the evil Mekon empire, defending the weak and chastising the strong, on and off since 1950.

In a drab post-war world, amidst the aftermath of rationing and austerity, Dan epitomised the best of British: he never cheated, he never lied and his word was his bond.

In fact, unlike most modern comic book heroes, the whiter than white Colonel Dare was so squeaky clean even parents, teachers and clergymen gave him the nod of approval – but then, in terms of artistic conception, Dan was at least partly the son of a clergyman himself.

The Eagle comic, of which Dan was the uncontested star for a staggering 10 years, was the brainchild of an artist (Frank Hampson) and a vicar (Marcus Morris). Morris had always wanted to produce a Christian comic, something that would dilute the harmful influences of imported American horror magazines. With their violent stories, tales of horror, rape and murder, these weren't considered suitable reading matter for wholesome young men. Hampson's wartime memories of watching Hitler's rocket experiments from further up the Belgian coast had injected him with an entirely different enthusiasm: he was obsessed with rockets and space.

The two met in 1949, while Morris was looking for an artist to further his Christian comic strips, planned and produced a dummy copy of what was originally called The Dragon (The Eagle was suggested by Hampson's wife) and had it accepted almost immediately by Hulton publishing.

Launch issue blasted off with 20 action-packed pages – just under half in full-colour – cost eightpence and had a print run of about a million copies. In deference to Morris' original intentions, the travels of St Paul were featured on the back cover. A full colour episode of Dan Dare – Pilot of the Future, graced the front. All the strip's most important characters were introduced in the very first issue: Dan, his faithful side-kick Digby and his commanding officer, Sir Hubert. The Mekon's spectacular entrance was reserved for a few issues on.

In size and quality, The Eagle beat the competition hands down. The post-war paper shortage meant most comics were confined to eight-page black and white specials which only ran for a few issues in poor quality print. With full-colour stories, huge centre-spread pull-outs and lashings of detail, The Eagle, heavily influenced by more sophisticated American comic art (Hal Foster's Prince Valiant and Burne Hogarth's Tarzan) wasn't barely running in the same race.

The early issues were all about innovation: detailed full-page paintings, promotional tokens and photograph covers. The first spectacular series, which narrated Dan's exploits as he saved the planet Venus from the megalomaniac machinations of the manic Mekon and his Treens lasted until September 1951, was succeeded by bigger and better stories – The Red Moon Mystery, Marooned On Mercury and Prisoners Of Space. They all counted on the loyalty of the readership – most of the serials ran into months and years rather than weeks.

By 1955, with the establishment firmly on its side, The Eagle really had landed. The year marked the beginning of a trilogy of highly sophisticated Dan Dare adventures and the highpoint of our pangalactic pilot's distinguished career. The Man From Nowhere, Rogue Planet and Reign Of The Robots, contained such detailed renderings of alien landscapes and intergalactic hardware that collectors consider them among the most coveted Dan Dare strips.

Dan Dare mania raged. The Eagle remained a stalwart favourite among boys' own comics, and spawned annuals, books and an incredible amount of Dan Dare memorabilia. But the times they were a-changing and ultimately the bubble had to burst.

In 1959, a series of large-scale Fleet Street mergers led to Hulton being taken over by Odhams Press. The new owners were convinced that Dan's clean-shaven, public school respectability had to be updated if the Mekon-wasting hero was to survive into the 60s. Production, which had been organised personally by Hampson, along highly expensive lines, also had to be updated. Hampson left and of his original team of artists only two remained: Don Harley and Keith Watson. Odhams added Frank Bellamy and the trio continued producing strips until 1960 when Harley and a new artist, Bruce Cornwell, continued the fight.

The updated Dan Dare was much more of an action character. The stories unfolded more quickly and didn't last as long as the '50s serials but the revisions obviously weren't drastic enough. In 1962 the Dan Dare decline was clearly visible: horror of horrors, he had to share The Eagle's front page. Shortly afterwards he left it all together. Except for a brief revival in 1963, he spent the rest of the decade in black and white firmly tucked inside the cover. The Eagle itself was absorbed into IPC's Lion comic in 1969: Dan's last gasps were in the form of black and white reprints of his earlier '50s. In 1970 he was finally laid to rest.

It's a well-known fact, however, that you can't keep a good man down. Dan Dare's reputation as a pistol-packing space adventurer was hefty enough to win him several reincarnations.

The first came in 2000 AD. Dan, having suffered terrible injuries during a near-lethal space explosion, had been put into suspended animation for a hundred years until they had the technology and were able to rebuild him. Dan the bionic man, didn't have much in common with his previous life. He'd discarded his uniform in favour of the casual look – leather jacket and jeans – and, possibly as a result of his own accident, prepared to shoot first and ask questions after. His adventures, drawn first by Bellardinelli and then by Dave Gibbons (of Watchmen fame), were short, violent and full of pithy action.

The New Eagle comic, relaunched in 1987 also had a stab at revitalising the Dan Dare legend. This time, his great great grandson was pushed into the limelight. Drawn by Gerry Embleton, the younger Dan was less violent than his ancestor's 2000 AD incarnation but a lot more headstrong that Hampson's kind and compassionate gentleman.

Then, amidst a glare of publicity, in 1989 the original Dan returned to the pages of the comic he'd helped to make famous. Dan Dare, drawn by one of Hampson's original studio artists, Keith Watson, embarked on the first of a series of adventures. Watson bowed out after the first serial but Dan seems to be doing OK without him – along with Digby, Peabody and Sir Hubert he's even made it through the latest Eagle relaunch. And long may he continue to thrive.



THE ADVENTURES of Dan Dare were broadcast every evening on Radio Luxembourg for five years. The program, sponsored by Horlicks, even had its own fan club: in return for a Horlicks wrapper and a sixpence postal order made payable to Dan Dare you got a membership card and a Dan Dare space cap badge. Other Horlicks memorabilia included the Dan Dare periscope, tie pin and space cup. Attempts to put Dan on screen, once in the 50s and once in 1981 (a TV series to star James Fox and Rodney Bewes as Dan and Digby) never came off. Dan's only TV appearance to date was in a couple of '87 Mobil ads – and very smart he looked too.

THE ORIGINAL CHARACTERS



Daniel Macgregor Dare

DESCENDED from a long line of warriors which traces right back to Cromwell's army, Dan, a former public schoolboy and Cambridge graduate, displayed leadership qualities right from the start. His skill as a pilot combined with an impeccable sense of honour, earned him the rank of Space Pilot Class One and later Chief Pilot Of The Space Fleet. Unlike many super heroes, Dan's appeal is in his humanity, not his strength; when he gets into a scrape, he has to rely on his wits and his intellect to get him out. Violence is usually a last resort.



Jocelyn Mabel Peabody

DETERMINED to prove a woman has as much right to travel through space as a man, Professor Peabody showed that her skills as a botanist were invaluable early on in Dan's Venus expedition. A linguistics expert, Ms Peabody established the first communications link with the Mercurians and developed the chlorophyll lamp used to entice the Red Moon away from Earth.



Albert Fitzwilliam Digby

DAN's faithful batman entered the forces as an apprentice and through courage and determination worked himself up to the rank of Spaceman Class One. Digby's chief virtues are his loyalty and his common sense. Unlike Dan, he doesn't have too much patience with excessive brainwork and prefers the active life. In combat Digby is no more a stranger to danger than Dan. In fact, there is only one thing of which he is genuinely afraid: Aunt Anastasia who brought him up.



Sir Hubert Gascoigne Guest

KNOWN affectionately by his men as 'orrible Hubert, Dan's fatherly CO would really prefer to be in the thick of the action than desk-bound Controller Of The Intergalactic Space Fleet which he and Dan's father helped to found.



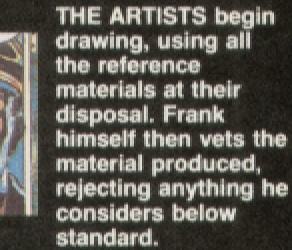
The Mekon

EVER since his birth around the year 1750, the melon-headed Mekon has spelled nothing but trouble for citizens all over the galaxy. In his first adventure Dan succeeded in thwarting the bulbous green being's machinations to overthrow Venus and the two have been arch-enemies ever since. Unlike Dan, the Mekon lies, cheats and stops at nothing to achieve his ends. In his time he's been responsible for building giant lasers and huge space stations, enforcing economic blockades and engineering biological weapons. Luckily Dan has always stopped him in the nick of time.



FRANK Hampson writes the scripts and produces rough layouts.

THE TEAM put on spacesuits and have photos taken which serve as soruces of reference for each frame.



THE ARTISTS begin drawing, using all the reference materials at their disposal. Frank himself then vets the material produced, rejecting anything he considers below standard.

Even by contemporary standards this was a very expensive way of producing a magazine. During the zenith of Dan's career it was still profitable but by the time Odhams Press took over, the financial credibility of such a time-consuming process was much more dubious.

AND DAN THERE WERE EIGHT



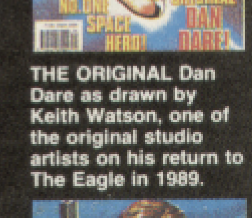
DAN as he appeared in the original Eagle, originated by Frank Hampson and drawn studio-style.



BELLARDINELLI'S Dan in 2000 AD – tough, strong and violent – a far cry from the original public schoolboy.



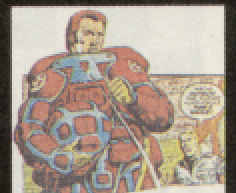
THE HERO of the 1982 Eagle relaunch: Dan Dare junior was a lot less humane than his grandfather.



THE ORIGINAL Dan Dare as drawn by Keith Watson, one of the original studio artists on his return to The Eagle in 1989.



IN THE '60s Dan was produced by a number of artists including Don Hartley and Keith Watson.



DAVE Gibbons took over where Bellardinelli left off.



HAM DARE. Oink's version of the superhero was the work of J T Dogg.



DAN Dare in 1990 – by Mark Pugh and as handsome as the day he was born.

MINDROLL
Thalamus

AMIGA

PRICE	£19.99
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	64%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	80%
VALUE	73%

OVERALL
76%

ATARI ST
N/A

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

PRICE	£29.95
OUT	Now

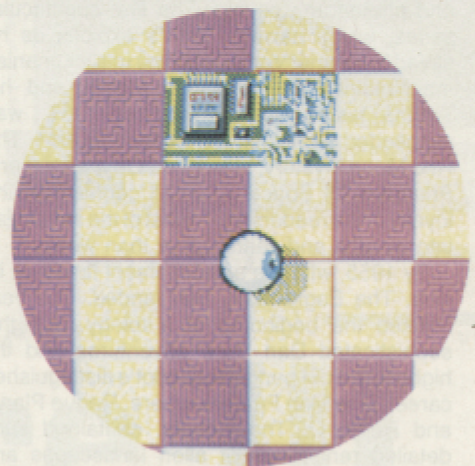
Mindroll

With half a mind to achieve ultimate dexterity, Gordon Houghton casts a beady eye over Thalamus' reincarnation of its 8-bit classic.

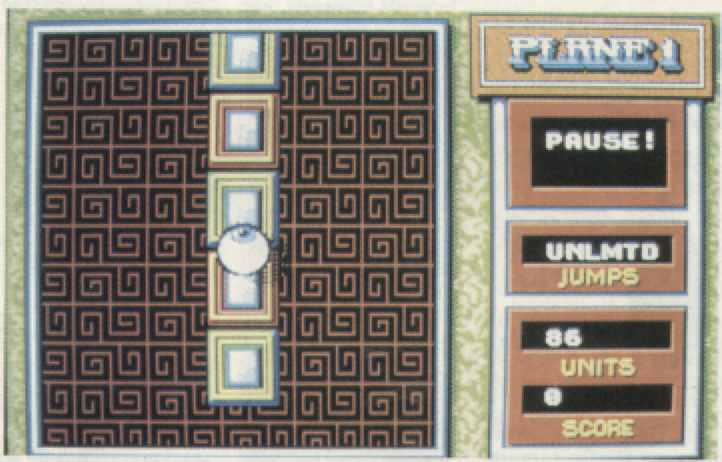
WHO'D WANT to be the Orb of Id these days? It used to be a simple job: sitting back with a glass of Tequila, pretending to be the totality of impulsive reactions comprising the unconscious mind. Nowadays every Tom, Dick and Sigmund wants to plonk you inside 10 planes of an insane 3D puzzle.

The only way to escape is by finding the Goal – this involves picking up keys and amulets, using transporters and avoiding electric seas, death skulls, invisible walls and holes – all within a strict time limit. The faster you complete a plane, the more time you carry over to the next one. But beware – one step over the edge and you fall into the deep, dark void of Freud.

Luckily, some Jung fool has allowed you to choose the order in which you tackle these puzzle planes, and provided bonus stages where you can pick up extra points and seconds. So what are you waiting for? Get rolling!



PLANE FIVE is an out-and-out puzzle game. The object is simply to fill the puzzle with tiled squares: running over plain squares turns them into the tiled variety – and vice versa. But watch out for the electrical circuits: one type does nothing, the other toggles the status of nearby squares.



PLANE ONE: this gentle introduction into the weird world of Mindroll is actually five sub-games, all of which involve teensy tests for dextral dudes, ranging from a tight slalom course to a hop 'n' jump mini-game set on an electric sea.

A

When you first pick up **Mindroll** it's like trying to walk on an ice rink in a pair of stilettos. Eventually, you get the hang of a couple of stages, string some points together and discover that your joystick isn't made of jelly. This is because the planes aren't too tricky to master – there are only a couple of real tough cookies, and you can get used to those in only a few hours. **Mindroll**'s secret, though, is its points system: not only are you rewarded for completing planes but also for the time it takes you to finish – the faster and smoother your reactions, the higher your score. This means that long after you master the 10 planes individually, there's the tendency to have another go just to grab an extra few points for the highscore table (which is saved to disk). The one major disappointment is presentation: the loading system is sluggish, the scrolling jerky, the planes aren't full screen, the collision detection can be brutal and the music and sound effects are limited. If you accept these drawbacks, there are many hours to be spent divided between wishing you could chuck the computer out of the window and having one more go all the same.

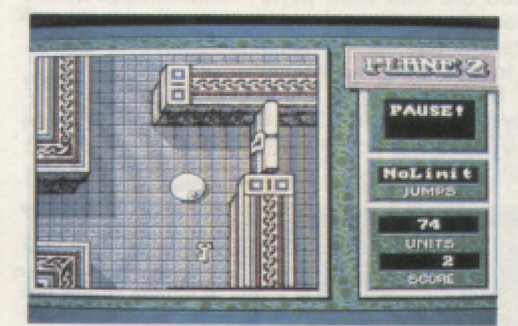
"Long after you master the 10 planes individually, there's the tendency to have another go just to grab an extra few points for the highscore table."

PC

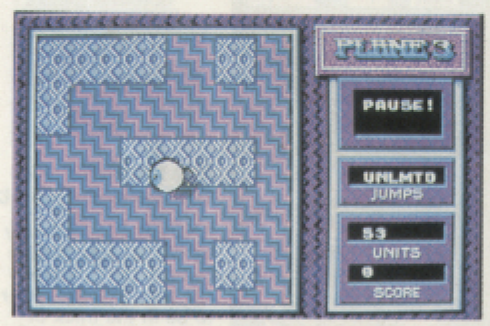
What's seen and read here is true enough for this version. CGA, Tandy, EGA and VGA are all supported, but there's no such joy for owners of AdLib or Roland sound boards.

ST

This quest for ultimate dexterity has been called off due to no one having bothered to convert Mindroll to the ST. And don't keep an eye out for a version in the future – there isn't one planned.



PLANE TWO is a maze game of sorts and sees our rolling orb seeking keys to open doors, avoiding death skulls and using teleports in his gloopy quest for the elusive Goal.

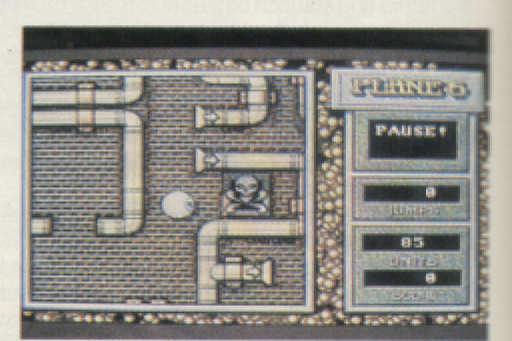


PLANE THREE is partly covered by invisible walls, random teleports and a deadly electric sea – deadly because it accelerates the clock. All you need to do is find four hidden amulets to make the Goal appear.





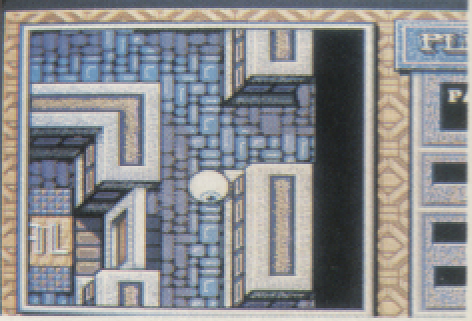
PLANE FOUR gives new meaning to rolling your eyes: it's a rapid race down-screen avoiding time-sapping blocks and using lifts to help you over impassible barriers.



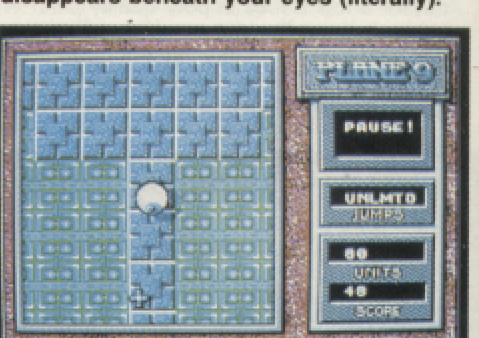
PLANE SIX is a suck 'n' blow extravaganza, which involves grabbing three sets of surprises (question marks) in the correct order. Make the wrong decision and you get delivered first-class to an Eliminator.



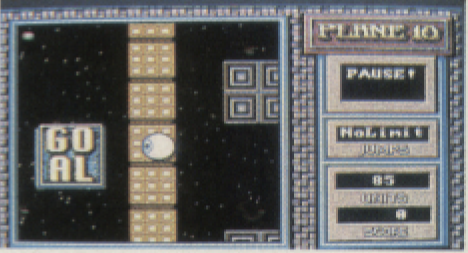
PLANE SEVEN is probably the easiest level, even with its random plane selection. Avoid the Goal until you collect the bags of time bonuses lying around.



PLANE EIGHT features one of four randomly-generated mazes. Collect all four keys and you gain entry to the Goal at the centre of the maze. As an added incentive, the floor rapidly disappears beneath your eyes (literally).



PLANE NINE sees the unwelcome return of the electric sea. It's unavoidable unless you bash your way through the cubes. And if you want to do some heavy bashing you need to find some energisers...

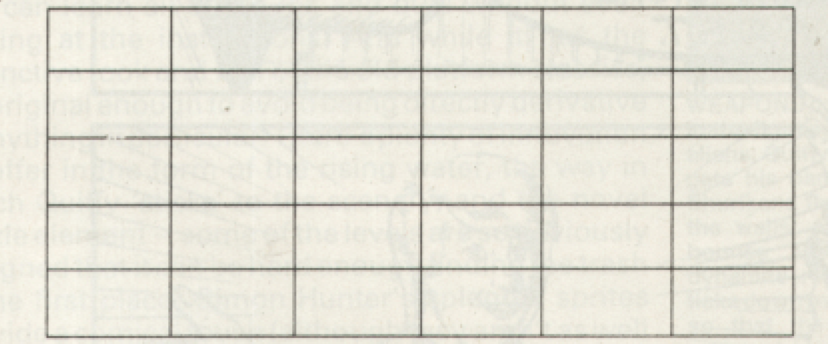


PLANE TEN isn't a sight for sore eyes: it's a straight platform game with a twist – tackle more than one unit of height at once and you lose time. Big jumps and Freud's Void will keep you annoyed.



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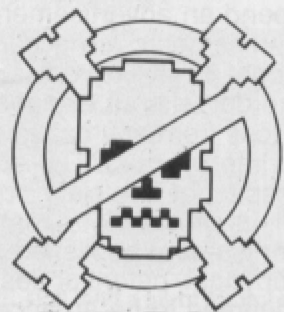
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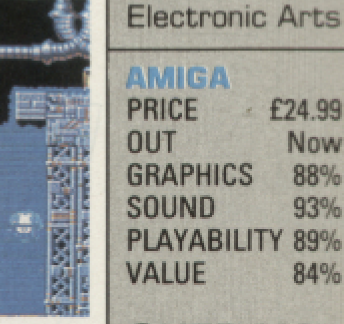
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SOUND	93%
PLAYABILITY	89%
VALUE	84%

OVERALL

88%

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IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
TBA

Flood

After the big splash made by Populous, **Bullfrog's pooled its resources to come up with gallons of platform action. Gary Whitta's keeping it all bottled up.**

IT'S NO fun being evicted – just ask Quiffy. After many years of peaceful solitude, living in a vast network of underground caverns, the little sticky green monster with the pot belly and Elvis haircut is in trouble. The system supplying water to the subterranean caves has gone terribly wrong, and now taps everywhere are pumping out fluid at a frightening pace – so fast in fact that before long the whole place will be one big aquarium.

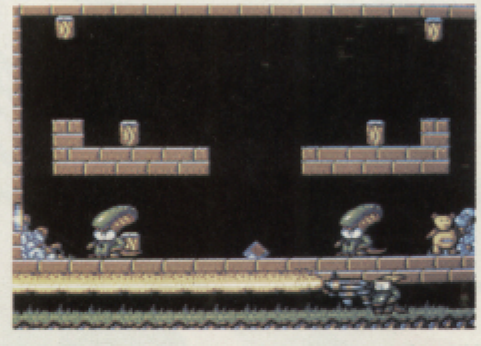
This is not good for our Quiff. You see, little sticky green monsters prefer dry land to wet. So he's packed his things and snapped on his designer goggles and is heading for the surface. The only problem is, being such a conscientious character Quiffy can't bring himself to leave until he's cleared up the terrible mess he's made of the caves.

If the cavern's are going to flood, they should at least be allowed to flood in style...

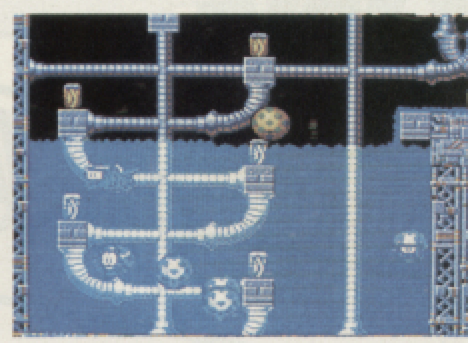
A Bullfrog's obviously learned from its mistakes with its first arcade release, **Fusion** – this time the boys have come up with an arcade game that's almost overloaded with compulsive action. The first thing that grabs you is the playability. The idea is so simple, you can learn all of the ins and outs without even looking at the instructions. And while it has the distinctive look and feel of the old platform classics, it's original enough to avoid being directly derivative of anything in particular. There's plenty of innovation on offer in the form of the rising water, the way in which Quiffy 'sticks' to the scenery, and the novel puzzle element – some of the levels are so deviously designed that it can be hard enough finding the trash in the first place! Simon Hunter's splendid sprites provide a comical touch (although they aren't as well animated as they are drawn) and sound, for once, really does add an extra dimension to the proceedings. The atmospheric effects and jingles are some of most appropriate sounds ever heard. But at the end of the day it's the playability that impresses most, and with 42 levels to conquer, there's enough here to keep even the most toughened platform addict stuck to his screen for quite some time.

ST Atari Flood is in the very capable hands of Bullfrog's main man on the ST, Glenn Corpes. There's very little to differentiate it from the Amiga 'original' in the gameplay stakes – apart from the faster speed. But on the graphics front there are a few noticeable differences. For a start there's a tweaked colour palette (the green water is the biggest change), and it's full-screen – very rare for a multi-directional scrolling ST game.

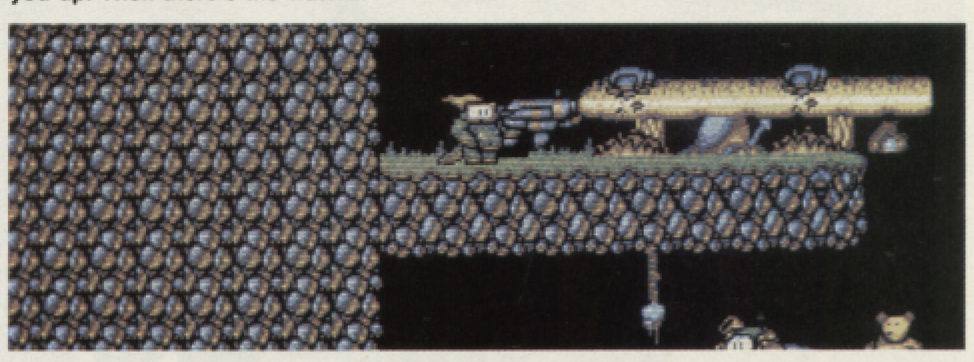
PC Nothing's being developed as yet, but there is a possibility of an IBM version sometime in the future – provided the other two hit the mark.

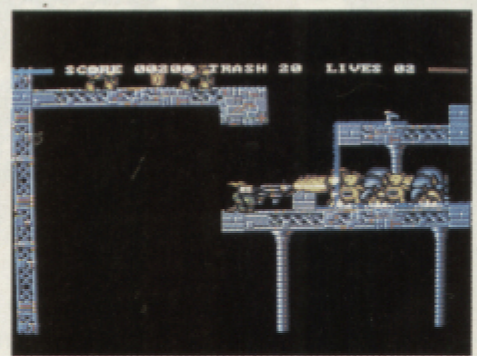


QUIFFY'S underground abode comprises 42 levels. Completing one is simply a matter of finding the exit to the next, locating and collecting all the trash – such as cola cans, telephones, and cassette tapes. The Trash Counter at the top of the screen shows how many pieces are to be collected (some levels have only a few, while others are real dumps). There's no time limit as such, but you can't afford to dawdle as a nasty invincible ghost is in hot pursuit – and he doesn't think twice about giving you a painful nudge to speed you up. Then there's the water...

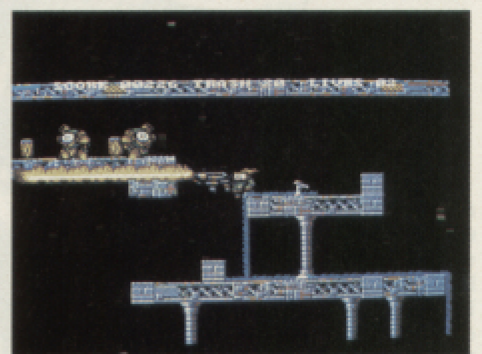


A TAP on each level gushes water at full blast. Rather than rising line by line, the liquid behaves realistically – overflowing, running down steps and so on – with impressive sloshing and gurgling sounds. When Quiffy ends up underwater, he's got no choice but to swim. His oxygen supply determines how long he can safely stay under (although he can jump out to gulp some more air) and it's often necessary to get wet to reach pieces of trash that may have been 'drowned' earlier on.



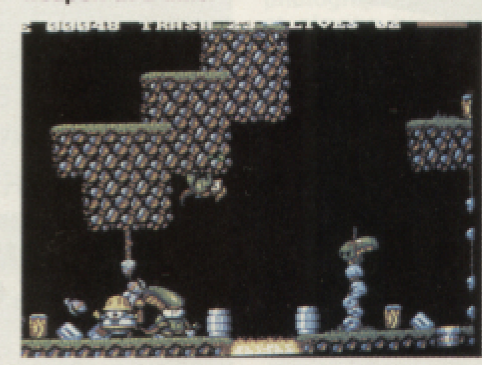


WEAPONS dotted around the levels are vital in the fight against the weird and wonderful aliens. Quiffy starts empty handed but soon gets his hands on a supply of grenades. Shurikens fly off at diagonals, spinning off the walls, while grenades clank as they bounce around before exploding. The dynamite remains stationary as its timer ticks down (which means you have to place it so that the charge goes off when the recipient is nearby), and boomerangs that behave just like the real things. By far the best fun of all though, is the flamethrower. Its burst of deadly fire should be used sparingly – otherwise you could find yourself in for a surprise! Sadly, Quiffy can only hold one weapon at a time.

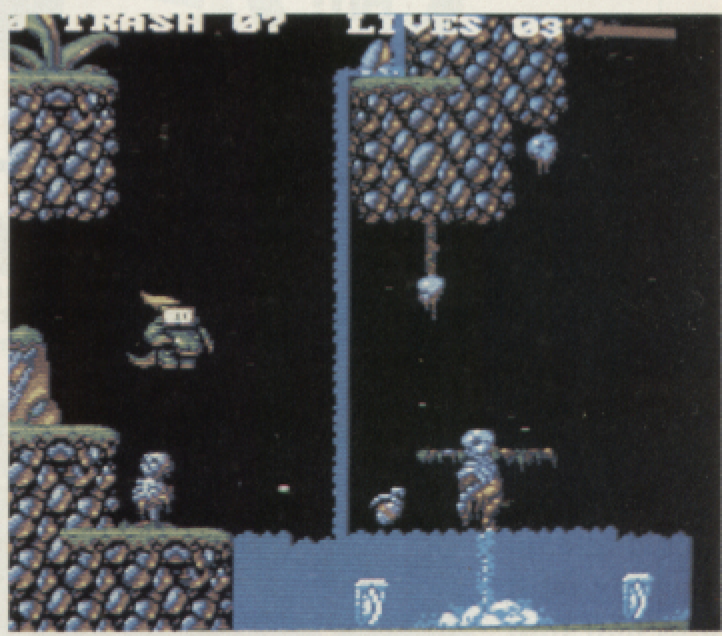


MOST adversaries do nothing more than potter about and affect Quiffy's energy level. There are some more unusual creatures though – like those that drop their own trash, and others that eat any junk they come across.

"The atmospheric effects and jingles are some of most appropriate sounds ever heard. But at the end of the day it's the playability that impresses most..."



DUNCAN Goodhew Quiffy ain't – but he does have a very special skill. The suckers on the soles of his feet mean that he can stick to virtually any part of the scenery – the walls, ceilings and even the powerful laser bridges that extend from platform to platform. Special features found on some levels make travel even easier. There are teleport stations, helium-filled balloons, a parachute to slow his rate of descent, and even a space hopper for extra jump height!

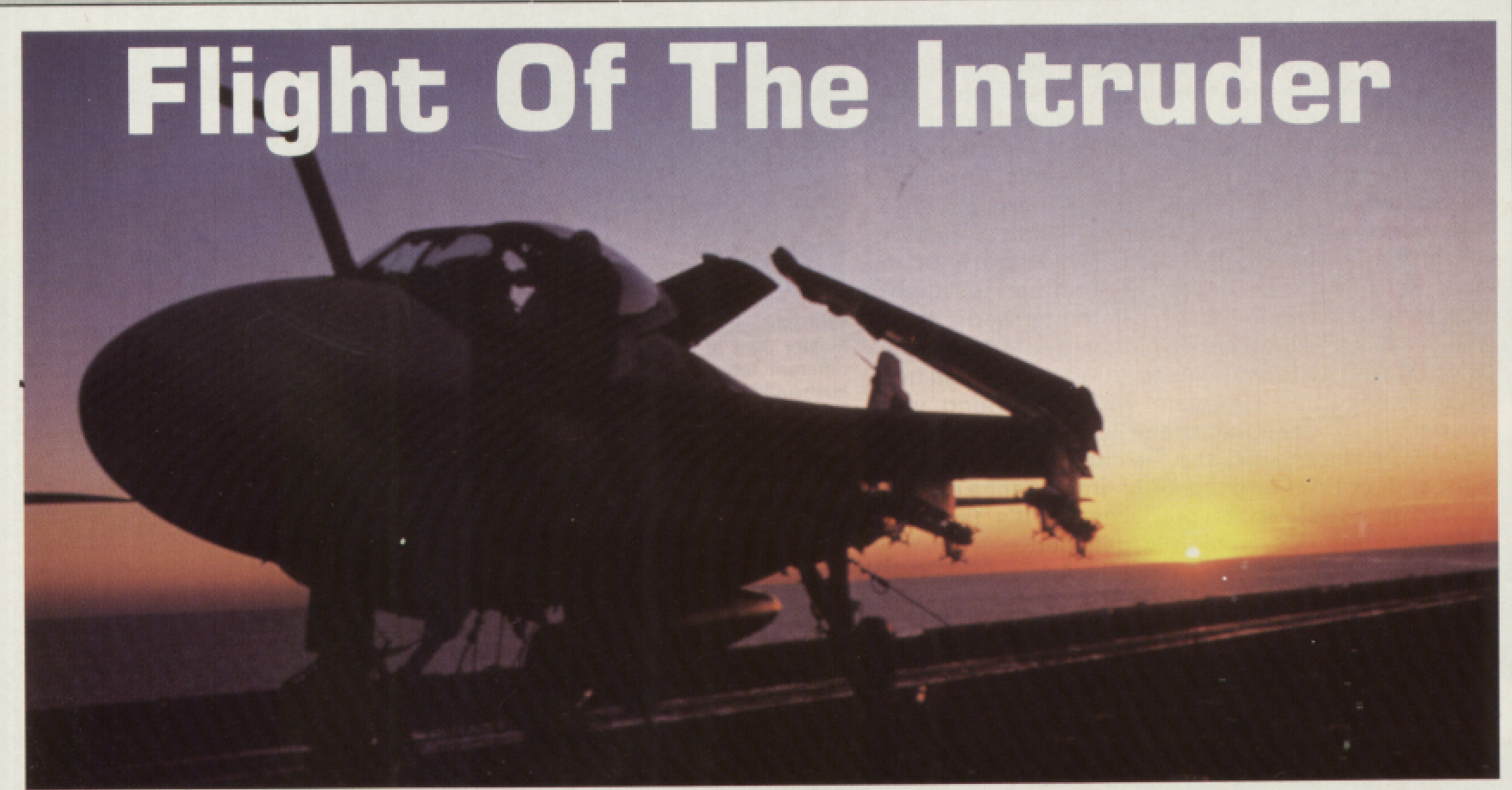


SPECIAL features include invisible doors, which grant entry to secret levels filled with bonuses, and magic switches, which either open doors to other parts of a level or release a wave of aliens after your jaded blood. There are also some special items to be found, including a question mark (which might do just about anything, depending on your luck), a sink plunger, and a water droplet. The plunger is the most helpful as it blocks the tap to slow down the water. The droplet on the other hand is best avoided – unless you want a tidal wave on your hands.



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Flight Of The Intruder



FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER
Spectrum HoloByte And Mirrorsoft

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES	
PRICE	£39.99
OUT	July
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	96%
VALUE	94%

OVERALL 95%

ATARI ST	
PRICE	£29.99
OUT	October

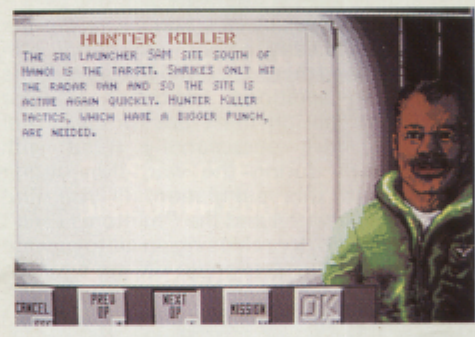
AMIGA	
PRICE	£29.99
OUT	October

When she heard that Spectrum HoloByte was launching a dual-plane flight simulation Kati Hamza just had to take it for a spin.

VIETNAM, late 1972. In a last-ditch attempt to get the North Vietnamese back to the peace table, US forces engage in the last real push of the war: the Linebacker Campaign. The objective is simple: wipe out enemy supply lines and bomb key military installations until, with their backs to the wall, the North Vietnamese have to negotiate.

Flight Of The Intruder, based on the best-seller novel by Stephen Coonts and soon to be released as a feature film, drops you slap bang in the middle of the action. There's a selection of available hardware: the A-6 Intruder bomber and the F-4 Phantom, its escort fighter plane.

A sophisticated auto-pilot function means that you can fly either, neither or both. It's so intelligent that it will fly up to the maximum of eight planes involved in any one mission entirely by itself – the pilot doesn't have to lift a finger. So whether you fly or observe, a piece of the action's guaranteed.



SELECT your initial plane and pick your operation – then choose one of the available plane missions attached to it. Alternative duties include such specifics as Escort (air and ground cover), MiGCAP (combat air patrol away from target area) and Iron Hand (flak suppression) in addition to the operation lynch-pin – the main role in the air-to-ground strike.

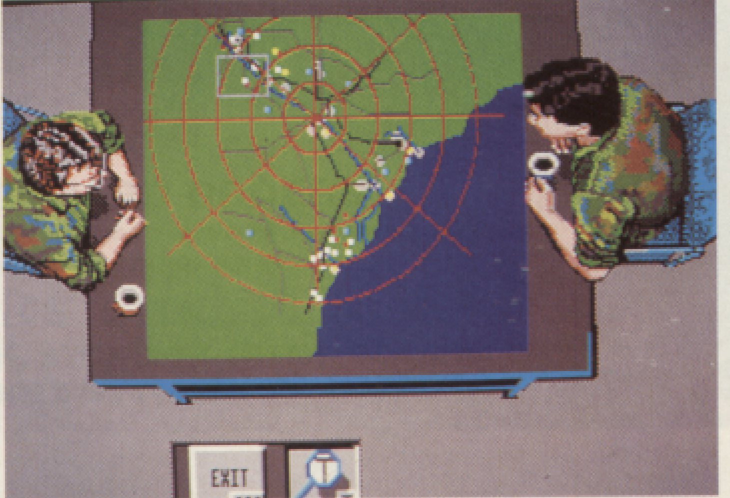
UNLIKE Falcon, with its sophisticated head-up displays and radars, FOTI has more standard look-down cockpit instruments. The radar toggles to the map and everything has been designed for maximum realism. Serious fliers can consult tables for information on optimum speed, height and dive angle when launching bombs. And when the going gets tough, impress your friends by surreptitiously switching on the auto-pilot.



THE BOMB shop. The Intruder has a selection of nine different weapons – the Phantom has 12. What you pick from the choice of free-fall bombs, laser-guided missiles and rockets depends on the kind of mission. On higher difficulty levels it's worth noting that the Shrike is a much less effective anti-rad missile than the Standard – it stops working when the enemy turns its radars off. The Standard, on the other hand, has its own problems – it's heavier and consequently unavailable on the more fragile F-4.

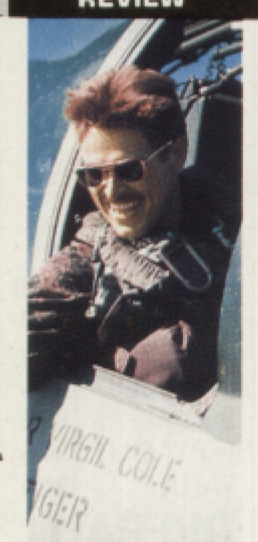


ZOOM into the map at HQ for more information and occasional photographs of specific targets. If you prefer you can even have a go at playing big cheese Commander of the Air Group: redirect waypoints, select primary and secondary targets, set up your own route, specify aircraft departure times and assign specific duties to appropriate aeroplanes.



"Both armchair supporters and serious flight fiends with rows of technical manuals on their shelves will find that there's plenty to entertain here."

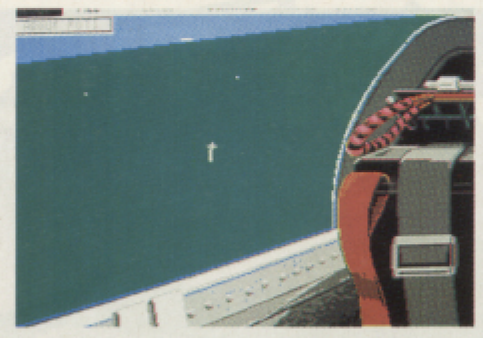




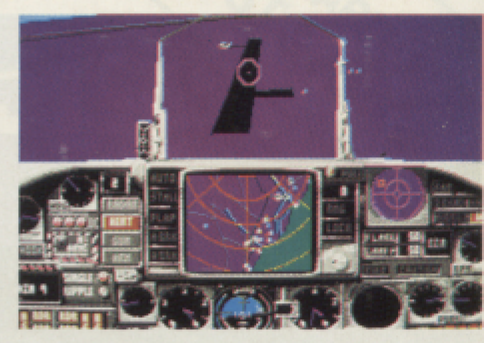
PC A ride in Spectrum HoloByte's Intruder is one journey you won't forget in a hurry. There's the landscape to observe, the other planes to watch and the landing to marvel at – and that's before you even start thinking about the possibility of flying yourself. Runcorn-based Rowan Software has put together a package that works as a highly sophisticated flight simulator and an extraordinarily entertaining spectator sport in one. Both armchair supporters and serious flight fiends with rows of technical manuals on their shelves will find that there's plenty to entertain here. FOTI doesn't just feature everything that Falcon has – it also comes complete with everything you wished it had. The speed of the 3D allows even more complex manoeuvres, and the choice of planes, the variety of options and the auto–intelligence ensure that it far outdoes its predecessor. It's fast, it's enjoyable and it's incredibly polished – even the clouds in the sky move realistically. Add to that VGA, AdLib sound support, a couple of excellent manuals and a copy of the original Stephen Coonts book and you get what can only be described as the creme de la creme of flight simulations. Enjoy it.

ST Currently in production, this incarnation of Intruder is likely to be every bit as exhilarating as the PC 'original'. The graphics should look almost identical to what's shown here and move as fast and as fluid as ST Falcon.

A As with the Atari version, this one should look and feel nearasdammit the same. As with Amiga Falcon, sampled sounds will be the order of the day.



THERE'S more than one way to watch a master pilot at work. The Intruder has 14 different internal views (seven positions, each looking straight ahead and up) and the Phantom, shown here, has 16. The F-4 extra is a second cockpit view – the fighter plane comes complete with its own personal bombadier.



IN DAYLIGHT, targets are easy to spot. For night-time missions however, your planes are equipped with the radar-guided DIANE system. Feed the co-ordinates you want to bomb in the computer before you start and the system lets you know when it's time to pull the trigger.



THE PHANTOM – just as capable as the Intruder of performing complex flight manoeuvres: rollaways, loops, wing overs, flips and yoyos in all sorts of different combinations. Conditions can be tailor-made. It's up to you to specify whether you want realistic or semi-realistic fuel usage, highly aggressive enemies, collisions, easy or ultra-tough targets. A mere click of the mouse button switches the appropriate options on and off.



MIGS are the Phantom's speciality. On the radar they are easy to spot – diamonds with holes in – and there are radio transmissions to give an additional indication of their approach. Though there are rumours that Intruders were occasionally fitted with Sidewinders during the war, they aren't included in this simulation. If you find yourself in a pinch and the Phantoms aren't doing their job, try releasing an air to ground missile. It tends to frighten off the enemy.

FOR A birds-eye view of the battle in progress, observe it from the outside in. Your plane can be admired from the carrier as well as satellite (fixed) and track (moving) viewpoints – you can rotate, zoom in and out, take photographs or switch on replay mode (for cosy home viewing later on). There's even a view from the missile as it heads for its target.



LANDING is a question of skill. Line up the yellow and green bars and remember to compensate for the carrier's movement. Unlike in most simulations, this baby won't stay still.

TIME for the post-mission briefing – a statistical review of your successes, your misses and your failures.



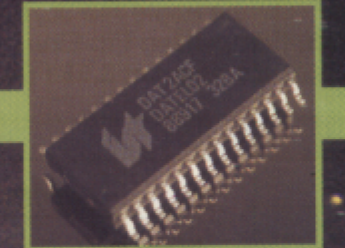
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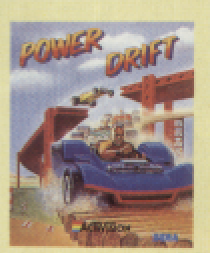
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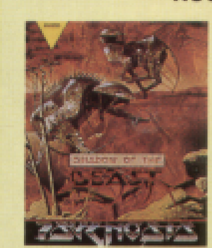
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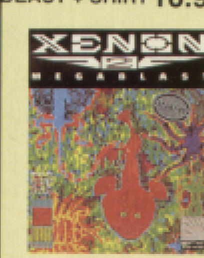
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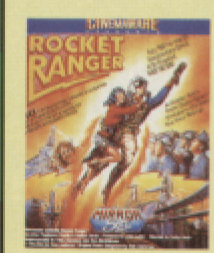


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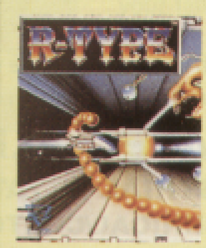
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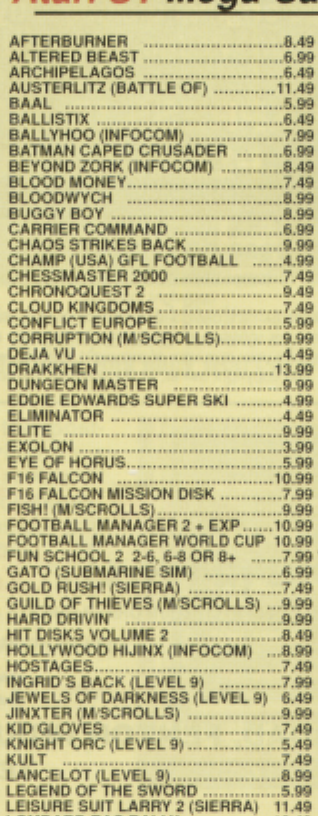
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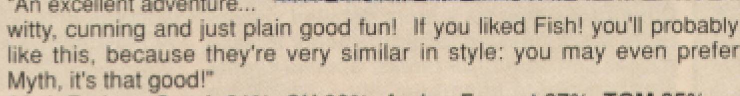
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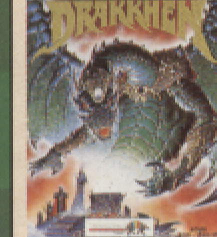
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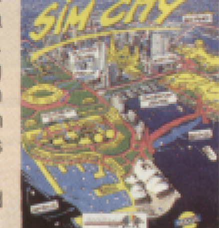
Amiga Format said: "An excellent adventure... witty, cunning and just plain good fun! If you liked Fish! you'll probably like this, because they're very similar in style: you may even prefer Myth, it's that good!"

Myth Ratings: **Crash 91%, CU 90%, Amiga Format 87%, TGM 85%**

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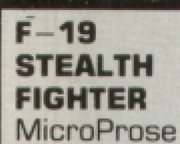
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F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse

ATARI ST

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GRAPHICS	87%
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OVERALL 95%

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F-19 Stealth Fighter

What can MicroProse do with the ST and Amiga that its hasn't already done with the PC? Brian Nesbitt steals a look.

IT'S 30 feet wide, 59 feet long and has an almost invisible radar signature. The F-19 Stealth Fighter, the end-product of years of dedicated military research into radar invisibility, was one of America's most closely guarded secrets during the cold war. In theory, this huge, black death machine, could fly into enemy territory, release a barrel-full of bombs and be on its way out again before anyone realised it had come.

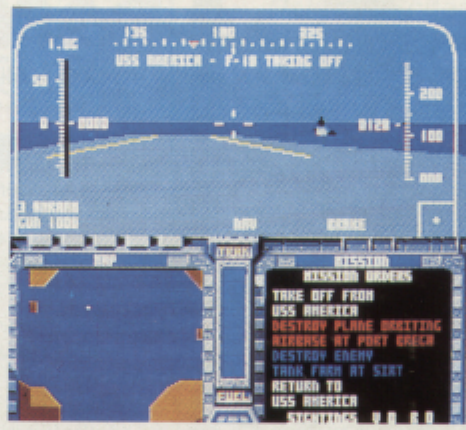
That's the theory – and until recently your only chance of putting it into practice was if you owned a PC. Now thanks to MicroProse UK, the original US flight simulation has finally been translated for the Amiga and ST – with the added opportunity of flying an F-117A thrown in. Not surprisingly, the gist's pretty much the same. As the pilot, you are thrown into the midst of the action in four different theatres of war: Libya, the Persian Gulf, the North Cape and Central Europe.

There are three different levels of warfare – cold, limited and conventional all-out attack – and the nature of your missions is specified accordingly. All you have to do is mosey on down to HQ for a browse through the available mission briefs, pick up your instructions and roar off towards the horizon with nothing but a 59-foot flying machine between you and the enemy skies.

Gulp.



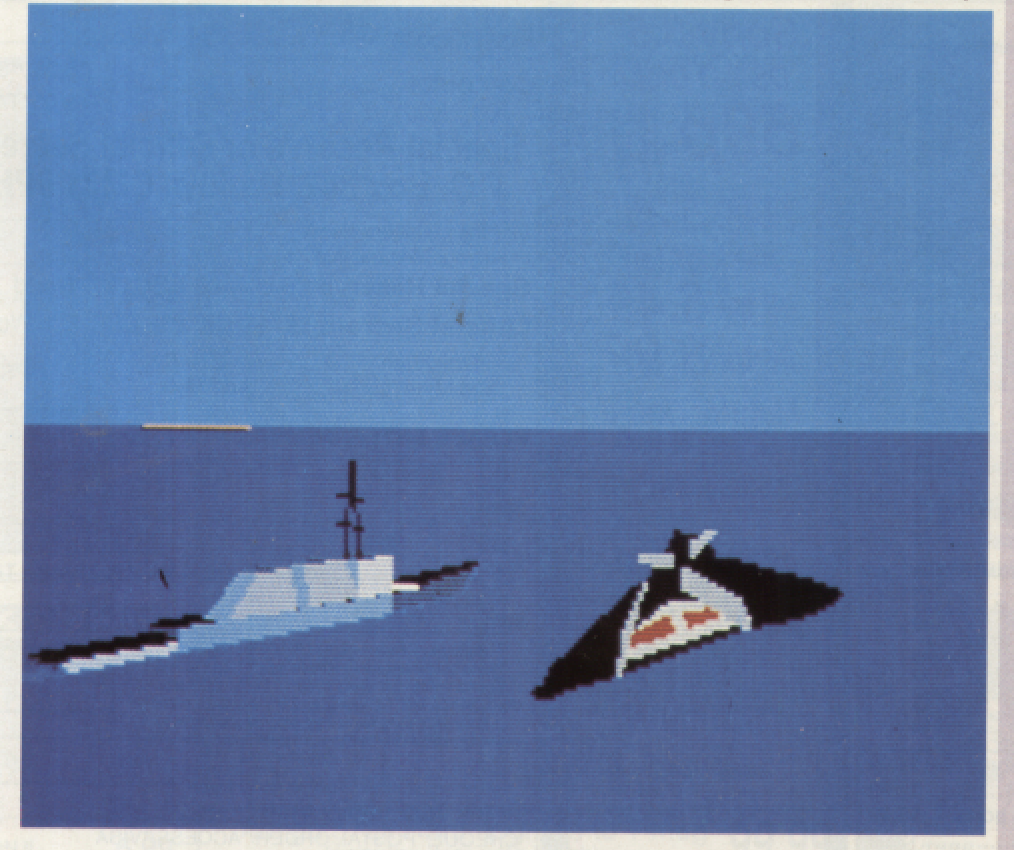
PICK a mission. Any mission. You can opt to take on a training assignment – no damage and no score – or head straight for the real thing. Whether you pick air-to-air combat or a strike mission, the options allow you to customise the operation: level of conflict, the skill of your opponents (from green to elite), whether crashes are possible, and whether landings are easy or realistically tough. Consult the map for a more detailed view of radar sites, mission targets, enemy missile ranges and hostile air bases. Special events are areas of high enemy activity – avoid them if you can.



COCKPIT Head Up Displays (HUDs) provide information on practically everything you need to know: vertical velocity, flight path, nose direction, bombsights and so on. There are four additional internal views: front (unobstructed by cockpit or HUD), rear, left and right. Any viewpoint can be expanded by about 60 degrees for a wide-angle glimpse of the action and thermal imaging tracking cameras give a view of targets up to about 100 kilometres ahead of the plane.

"The four mission territories, cold war, conventional and limited war situations plus the selection of available options translate into a huge number of different missions – each with its own level of enemies, radar installations and alerted bases to face."

OUT-OF-PLANE views chase your fighter from the rear, from a position behind the plane level with the ground, and from the side. There are TactiView options to show the fighter and its target from both your own and the enemy's point of view, and on most viewpoints you can zoom in and out for a better perspective. If you prefer, watch the target from the missile's eye.

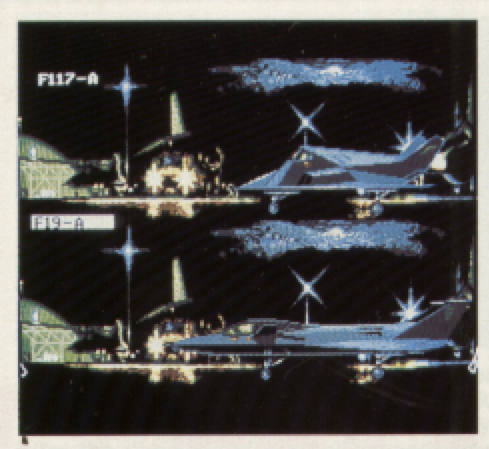


STEALTH STATISTICS

THE F-19, the almost invisible plane, was created at the Lockheed 'Skunk' Works in Burbank California. It was designed for all-weather strike and reconnaissance missions but works just as well on air-to-air interceptions and combat. The latest versions use a sophisticated laser target tracking system which gives the pilot a close-up picture (thermal or TV) of the target at all times, regardless of the angle.

Its design reflects the preoccupation with radar invisibility: Radar Absorbent Metal covers much of the base, sides and wings of the plane and all leading edges are covered in heat-resistant ceramics for minimal infra-red signatures – even the exhausts are directed through low-signature slats.

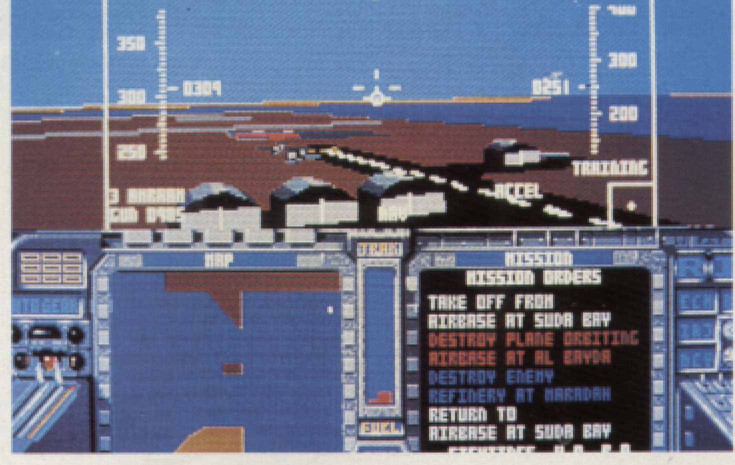
The F-117A is even more top secret. Officially acknowledged in November 1988, when training was expanded into daylight hours, this sleek, black fighter was only unveiled for authorised public viewing on April 21st 1990. Its official mission is to "penetrate dense threat environments and attack high-value targets with pinpoint accuracy". To this end it can be equipped with a huge variety of weapons, comes complete with a NAV/ATTACK system and has an automatic mission planner designed to optimise its capabilities. Anyone ambitious enough to fly it needs to have notched up a minimum of 1,000 flight hours plus extensive training on the specially designed F-117A simulator.



BECAUSE they have had to wait a touch longer than PC owning F-19 fans, ST and Amiga players get an extra bonus – a totally new additional plane. The F-117 is newer and even more secret than the F-19 but for the purpose of this simulation its objectives are exactly the same.

TAKE the weapons your crew chief thinks you need or pick the ones you like best from the hangar's hardware supermarket. The choice is yours: anything from homing fire-and-forget missiles, through anti-radar HARMs and thermal imaging Mavericks, to free falls and cluster bombs. If you go on reconnaissance or need to drop off special equipment, remember to load them first.

WAYPOINTS are preset for every mission, but if you think you know better you can set them yourself. For those with little patience the tedium of flying between points can be alleviated by switching to accelerated time and turning the autopilot on until the action hots up. Alternatively, you can use the positions of the stars in the sky to navigate (especially useful for when the equipment in question is damaged). Apparently, it's taken MicroProse around three years to accurately position the constellations!



BEFORE firing at a target, make sure the bay doors are open and wait for the missile to lock on – that's when the target box, shown here, turns oval. The best way to win an air-to-air encounter is to surprise the enemy – approach low and from behind.

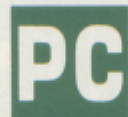


DURING debriefing your commander goes over your actions step by step in a painstaking analysis of your flight. Points are deducted for failing to meet objectives, being detected when you shouldn't have been and destroying friendly or civilian targets. Promotion and medals are awarded according to merit.



ST Fast, smooth and technically sophisticated. In squeezing **F-19 Stealth Fighter** into the memory of an ST, Microprose has managed to retain all the playability of the 'original' and thrown in an extra plane as well. The game's major advantage is its tactical scope. The four mission territories, cold war, conventional and limited war situations plus the selection of available options translate into a huge number of different missions – each with its own level of enemies, radar installations and alerted bases to face. Flying a successful operation draws on a variety of different skills – radar negotiation, bombing accuracy, air-to-air improvisation and plane handling skills. Which you need most depends entirely on the nature of your orders, the current war situation and whatever impromptu encounters you may make as you zoom through the skies. Presentation, right down to the expansive manual, is impeccable throughout. However, this isn't the sort of program a beginner can pick up and get to grips with straight away. It takes time and dedication to become a successful F-19 pilot – and it's worth it because the potential for technical tricks and tactics is immense. F-19 doesn't quite match the all-round accessibility of a product like Spectrum HoloByte's **Flight Of The Intruder** but for strategic depth and variety of gameplay, there's very little to touch it.

A Commodore owners will be hard pushed to detect (ouch) any differences between this and the ST version – it looks and feel every bit as impressive.

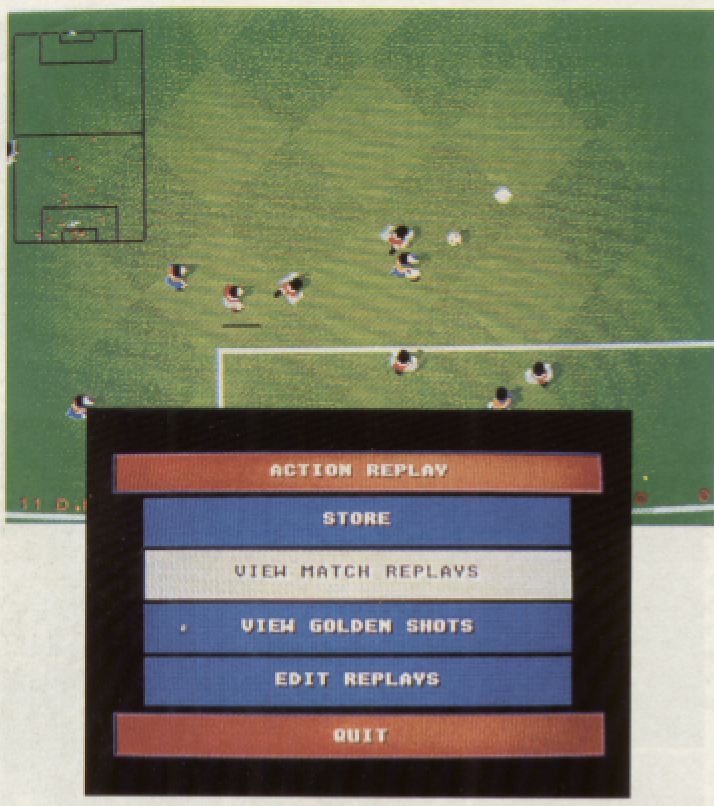


PC This MS-DOS compatible Stealth Fighter has been out and about for almost two years now. For further information, check out the review in Issue Six (March 1989).





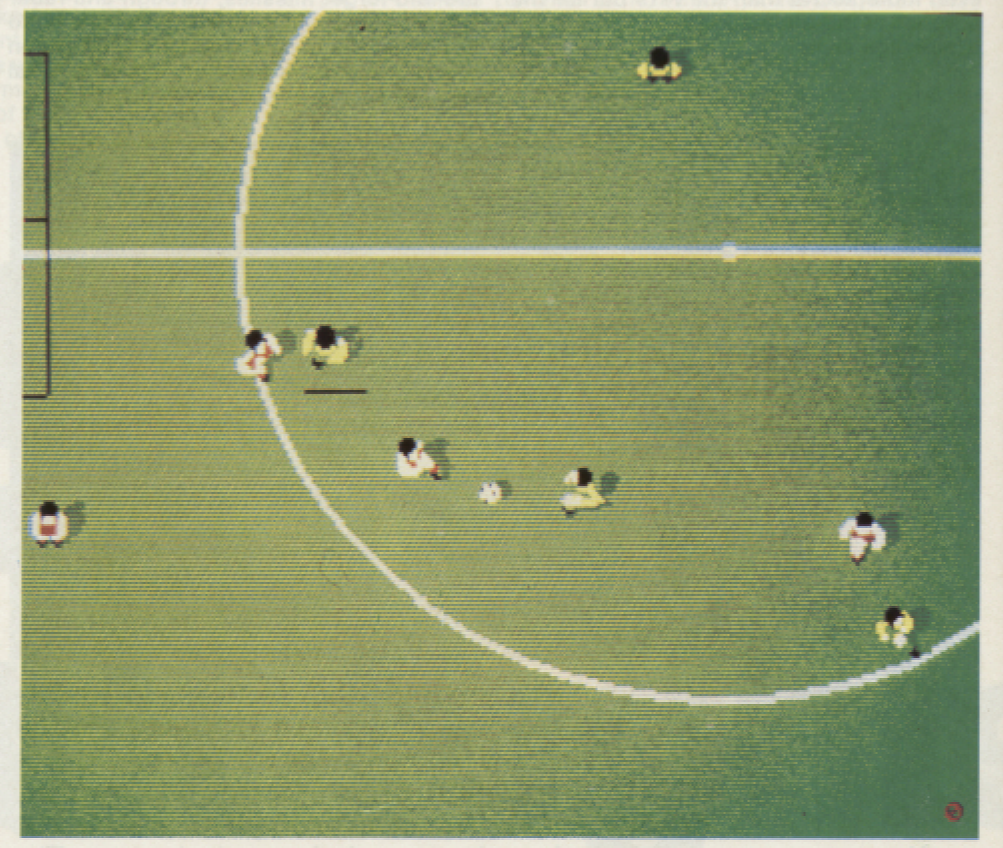
"Anco could so easily have spoiled a near-perfect product with the inclusion of so many new features. But it hasn't. The result is even closer to perfection, with blistering pace and a previously unseen level of realism."



AND LET'S see that again! At any time during a game, a single key-press forces a replay of the last 10 seconds of action – with a second key-press to initiate slow motion.
This is understandably best used directly after a goal is scored, leaving the scorer to add commentary for added effect (much to the annoyance of the person who conceded the goal). As an added bonus, a replay storage facility allows all those golden moments to be saved to disk. Incidentally, any cracking goals scored should be saved to disk and sent to The One. As of the next issue, prizes will be up for grabs for the Goal Of The Month.

IF YOU don't like your kit colours, get into Giorgio Armani mode and change them. Hundreds of strip variations are available from this wardrobe, including swish sashes and stylish stripes. You can create a replica of your favourite team's kit, or just go for something really outlandish – how about black shirts and shorts for the Referee's First 11? The only limits are your own imagination – and dress sense.

Kick Off 2

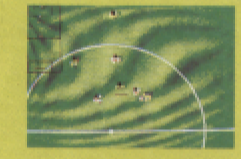


PRESENTATION is more in the style of Player Manager, with screens of selection boxes replacing the old scoreboard. Select pitch style, match length, game speed (either full, half or quarter-speed), team skill (represented now as International and Division classes), alter the strength of the wind, choose your referee, load in Player Manager teams, work out team tactics... the list goes on and on.

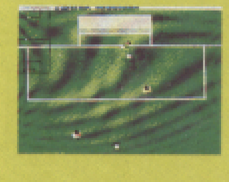
LIFE'S A PITCH...



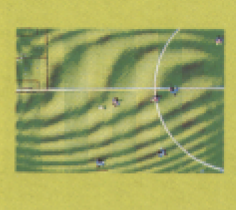
FOUR different pitch surfaces are on offer, each with its own characteristics. Apart from the advertising hoardings, the Normal pitch is much the same as before.



IF YOU like your action a little on the damp side, try the Wet surface. Note the impressive diamond cut of the grass.



THE REAL men will want to get stuck in on the Soggy pitch, which is not entirely unlike an Amazonian swamp – only slightly less dangerous. It's so wet the ball loses all bounce on contact with the grass.



QUEENS Park Rangers was one of the first clubs to install one – and one of the first clubs to get rid of one. Yes, it's the most controversial pitch of all: Plastic. In total contrast to the Soggy pitch, this one provides the most bounce.

Surely not! A better football game than the best football game ever? Gary Whitta dribbles all over the pitch. And the computers. And the monitors...

"THERE ARE some people on the pitch. They think it's all over. It is now!"

At least we all thought it was. One year ago, **Kick Off** changed the face of computer soccer. Despite a clutch of mildly irritating 'quirks' (the worst of which being the dozy 'keepers), its unique control system provides an unparalleled flexibility akin to the Real Thing. How could it possibly be toppled?

The answer's **Kick Off 2**. Apart from ironing out all of the original's problems, Anco's introduced a host of new features which greatly enhance the gameplay. In fact, it's almost a different game. Almost all of the elements mentioned in the Work In Progress in Issue 20 have found their way into the finished product. Only two are not present, but neither is missed: the off-side rule (apparently it almost completely killed the playability) and the referees and linesmen (there wasn't enough memory to include them – and anyway, their inclusion would only have been cosmetic). However, Anco has plans to release an enhanced version for owners of 1Mb machines, incorporating the officials along with a couple of little aesthetic extras (not that the unexpanded version needs much more).

Hell, it's a whole new ball game.



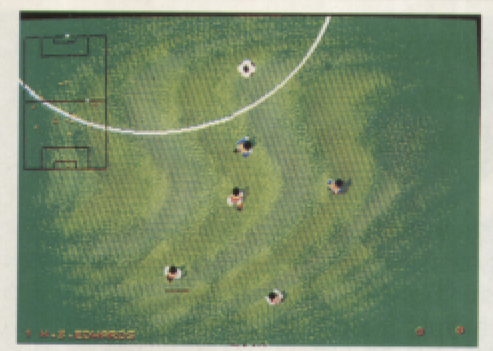
KICK OFF 2
Anco

AMIGA	
PRICE	£19.99
OUT	Now
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	97%
VALUE	95%

OVERALL 96%

ATARI ST	
PRICE	£19.99
OUT	Now

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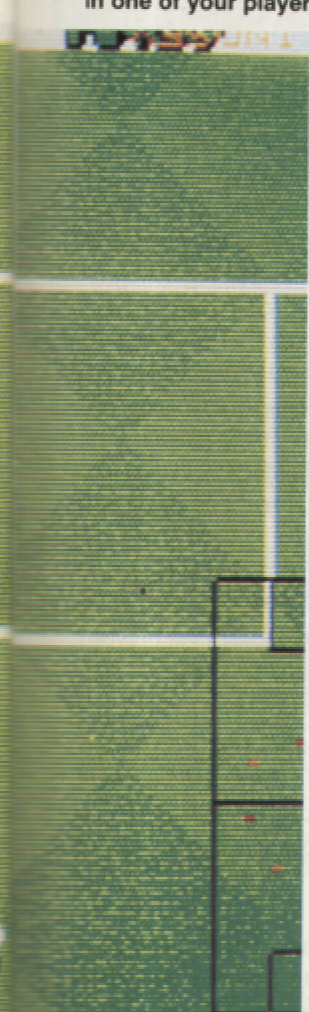


ONE OF Extra Time's more successful control enhancements has made its way into Kick Off 2. After-touch allows the player to slightly alter the direction of the ball immediately after it's been kicked – handy for fooling the new super-intelligent keepers. Purists can always remove this feature before play.

THE BASIC Kick Off league is still in operation, and again comprises eight national teams. There's also the option to play one-off International friendlies, eliminating the need to play through a whole league.



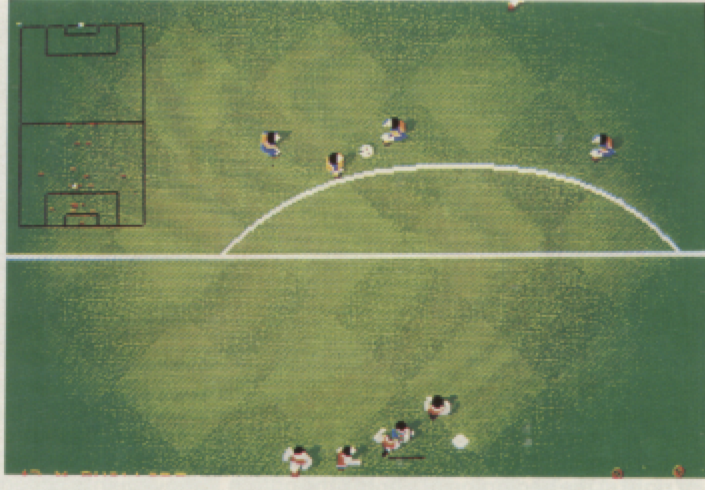
THE TEAM selection process is pretty much the same as Player Manager's. A team (complete with two substitutes) is chosen from the available squad, allowing more scope for strategy and tactics. The choice of substitutes is important, as repeated fouling, or even just one very nasty tackle, can result in one of your players hobbling off injured.



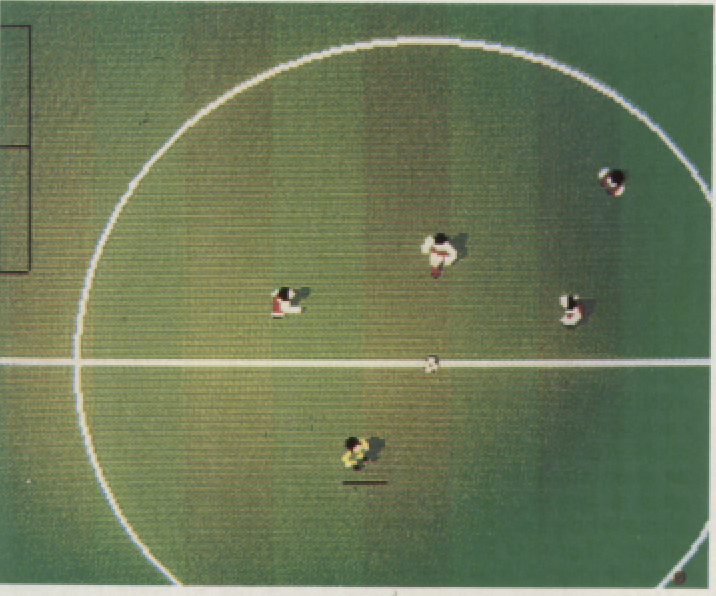
PLUG a suitable joystick adaptor into your machine and up to four players can take part simultaneously – two on each side! All players, however, must play position (as in Player Manager) to prevent anyone from hogging the limelight. The result is a different game altogether. A further novel feature is the facility to focus the 'camera' on any player on the pitch so that he stays centre of the screen at all times. It takes a little getting used to, but the result is well worth it.



SPECIAL EVENTS allows you to load in specially-created tournaments – and one is already included on the game disk to get you started. Appropriately, it's a recreation of the World Cup 1990, with the 24 teams playing in their respective groups before battling it out in the Quarter and Semi Finals, and ultimately the final itself. The accuracy of the teams' qualities is debatable – although arguably it reflects the unpredictable nature of the World Cup. In one brief, completely computer-controlled tournament, Italy lost to the USA, and Spain eventually managed to win the World Cup. And yet, in another, Scotland drew with Costa Rica, and England did the same with The Republic Of Ireland.



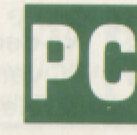
ALL SET-PIECES, namely throw-ins, corners, goal kicks and free kicks, are now more involved. It's possible to determine not only the direction and height of a corner kick, but also its strength – the same goes for throw-ins, and also goal kicks as far as direction and strength are concerned. The free kicks are the most improved. Now the opposing team creates a proper wall, and a whole world of strategies are on offer. You can dummy a kick and pass to another player, give the ball different degrees of left or right bias, dip and swerve it and even jump over the ball, leaving another player to take the kick!



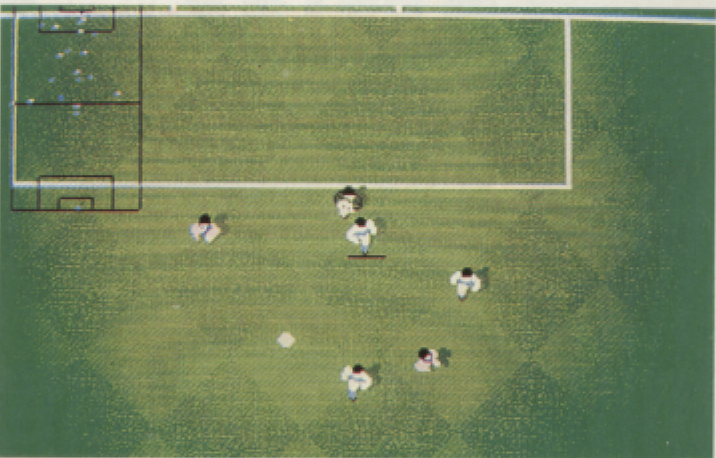
AN EXTRA element of tension comes in the form of an option to have extra time come into play when a game ends in a draw. The duration of the match determines the length of extra time played. And if there's still no winner after that, a penalty shoot-out provides a nail-biting sudden death experience.

A Anco could so easily have spoiled a near-perfect product with the inclusion of so many new features. But it hasn't. The result is even closer to perfection, with blistering pace and a previously unseen level of realism. The new pitch surfaces, the decent 'keepers (which actually make it play even more like the Real Thing), the wealth of options, the kit designer, the special events, the action replays, the match highlights, the advanced team tactics... not one feature seems out of place. And if there is something to cause displeasure, you can always play without it! There is one tiny flaw in this diamond though – a rare bug where the clock freezes, leaving you to play forever. But what the heck, it's not the winning that counts – it's the taking part. And there's no better place to do that than Kick Off 2: the ultimate soccer simulation.

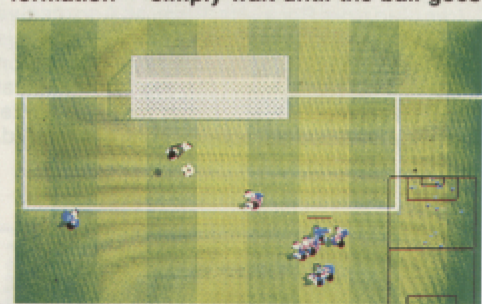
ST This one's every bit as improved and playable as its Amiga counterpart. Well, with the exception that even though the different pitches behave accordingly, they all look the same (ie: horizontal two-tone green raster stripes).



No details are available at present, although the good news is that an MS-DOS compatible Kick Off will soon be available for 24.99.



AS WELL as the four regular Kick Off formations, there are some more to choose from: Blitz, Lockout, Criss-Cross and Falcon have all made their way from Extra Time to provide a total of eight strategies. The classier acts may prefer to load the more complex tactics of a previously created Player Manager team. And as an added boon, you don't have to wait until half-time to alter your formation – simply wait until the ball goes out of play.



YOU CAN forget about employing the famous Brennan Runaround technique from Kick Off. Now the 'keepers are almost superhuman – they come out of their area to literally pluck the ball from your feet, and are capable of pulling off some mind-blowing saves that would make even Neville Southall stand proud. That's not to say the 'keepers are without their weak spots. A well-aimed powerblaster can still result in a fumble and the possibility of scoring on the rebound, but at least there's almost no chance of scoring soft goals.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

THERE'S more to the Special Events option than meets the eye. Anco has plans to release a series of add-on disks, recreating tournaments and great League and International teams from history as authentically as possible. Just think – it's the chance to play with a computerised version of the greatest ever Liverpool squad, or perhaps even to captain the 1966 England World Cup team! The price for all this glory? A mere £4.99.

ORIENTAL GAMES
MicroStyle

ATARI ST

PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Early July
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	92%
VALUE	85%

OVERALL 88%

AMIGA

PRICE	£24.99
OUT	Early August

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
TBA

"Oriental Games is just about the most comprehensive martial arts simulation to date."

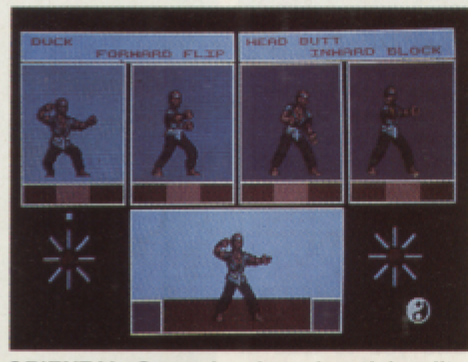


Gordon Houghton likes martial art but lacks discipline, so MicroStyle gave him three of the best.

Oriental Games



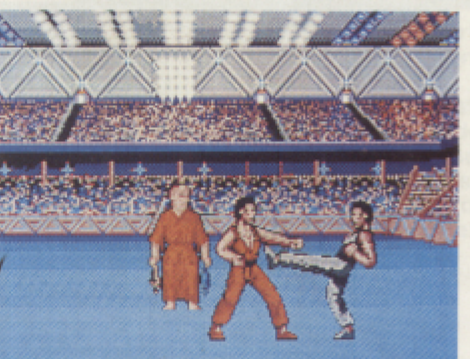
REGISTRATION allows you to set the game's parameters according to taste: 1-16 human players, three difficulty levels, a two-player option, practice bout, preferred stance (left or right at the beginning of a bout), the option to watch computer opponents fight and the ability to edit the joystick positions to match your own skills.



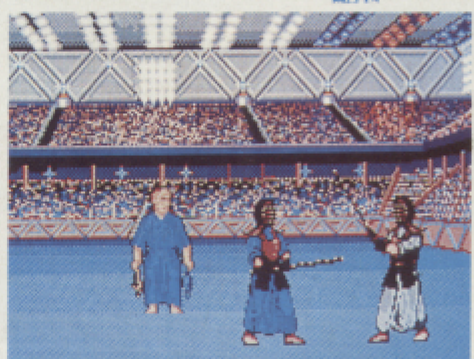
ORIENTAL Games' unique joystick editor allows you to customise the interaction between joystick and screen character. On a simple level you can toggle single movements according to taste – on a more complex plane altogether is the ability to preprogram a sequence of up to four moves per joystick direction.

THE MARTIAL arts equivalent of the Olympics is the Oriental Games, a tournament which attracts the world's greatest fighters to a three-discipline contest. Martial artists from the schools of Kung Fu, Kendo and Kyo-Kushin-Kai (Freestyle) each take part in individual mini-tournaments before entering the Grand Tournament proper, in their attempt to become Grand Master.

Practice bouts against other opponents are permitted, but once you are eliminated from any of the individual disciplines, your challenge for the supreme accolade is ended.



IF YOU want to be king of the kung-fu castle, you have to kick 'n' chop your way through some seriously tough opposition. The 15 basic moves include flips and jumps, a leg sweep, duck and punch, flying kick and of course, the roundhouse kick. Kung-fu is only one of the three disciplines, each of which follows the same format: as the lights go up, you are given a clue to your fighter's style – the description at the top of the screen (ranging from Reckless, through Aggressive to Defensive) helps you to anticipate his actions. The points system is displayed on the row of five lights at the top – all green at the start, the colours cycle through white, orange and red as scoring hits are landed.

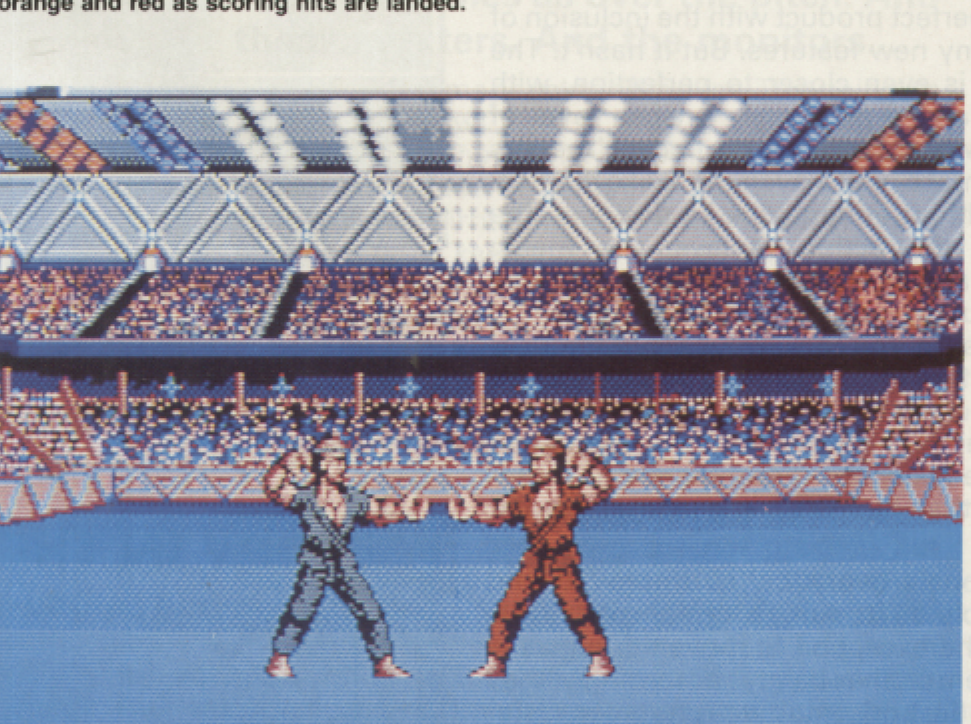


KENDO is a ritualised form of fencing dating back 300 years – fighters dressed in highly stylised protective clothing strike blows with bamboo shinai. It's a very rigid discipline: after a green 'life' is lost, contestants formally bow and retreat to continue the bout afresh. There are 14 basic moves available, including four blocking motions, three types of feign and a diagonal head cut. The referee in the background marks scores as they happen.



THE DOJO (fighting school) is where all the action takes place. Here great crowds gather to witness the world's finest martial arts practitioners kick shin and break bone over a trio of styles.

ST **Oriental Games** is just about the most comprehensive martial arts simulation to date. Its strategic scope is almost limitless: the joystick editor allows literally hundreds of movement combinations to be accessed from just 16 joystick directions – and these can be saved to disk for later use. Up to 16 human players can take part over three difficulty levels and the subtlety of the Merit Awards system gives an extra incentive to perform well rather than simply to win. The tournament structure coupled with some neat spot effects such as the crowd's Mexican wave and flash photography conveys a genuine competition atmosphere. If this three-discipline tournament was all you had, it would be good enough. But Oriental Games is packed with extra presentation features which make it stand above the competition: there's a straight two-player option, the ability to practice bouts or watch two computer opponents fighting – you can even choose the direction you face at the start of a bout. Two aspects essential to the success of a beat 'em up are particularly well implemented. The graphics might not look astounding at first, but the animation is very smooth, moves are performed with lightning speed and the all-important collision detection is pixel-perfect. The computer intelligence level is similarly well worked out: most novice opponents serve as kick practice after half an hour or so, but becoming Grand Master will take a very long time. Beat 'em up fans won't find a more accurate, playable and flexible martial arts simulation than this.



FREESTYLE, or Kyo-Kushin-Kai, is the most liberal of the trio of disciplines: a no-holds-barred kick 'n' punch event for people who like getting bruised – there's no referee to pass judgement. Its 18 manoeuvres are similar in style to Kung Fu, but also include a chin-punch and a head-butt. As in all the disciplines, correct collision is essential to success: a pixel or so out and you are adjudged to have kicked 'around' your opponent.

A The Amiga version should feature crisp sound effects but the gameplay will remain essentially the same. It won't be available until early August, at the same price of 24.99.


No decisions have yet been finalised for a PC version, apart from the price – when it is released, it should cost 24.99.

PROJECT
Rick Dangerous 2

PUBLISHER
Firebird

AUTHOR
Core Design

Simon Phipps (Concept, Design, ST & Amiga Programming, Sprite Graphics, Sound FX)

Terry Lloyd (Concept, Design, Background Graphics)

Dave Pridmore (Map Editor Programming, Rick Control Development)

Bob Churchill (Level Design)

John Kirkland (PC Programming)

Chris Long (Allsorts)

INITIATED
April '90

RELEASE

AMIGA
September

ATARI ST
September

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
September

DANGEROUS: ME

Gary Whitta braved the trip to Derby to talk to Core Design about the return of its most popular (not to mention dangerous) creation.

SIMON'S honed his programming skills since Rick's last adventure, so now there are five larger levels than before – up to 48 screens in size in fact. This preliminary sketch of the first level shows also how Simon is trying to give each one a relevant overall shape, rather than just a row of connected towers – the alien mothership is therefore in the shape of a space rocket.

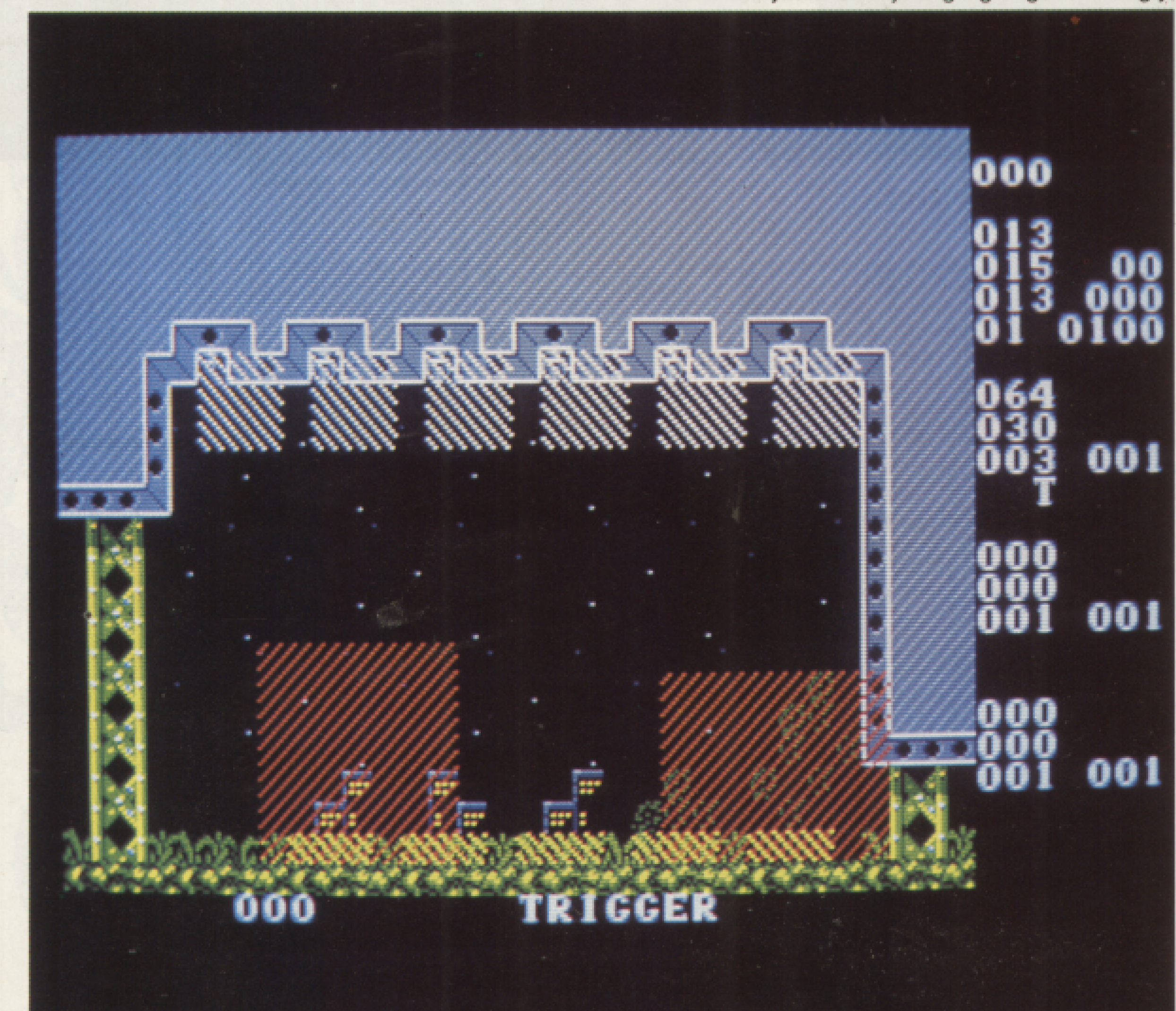
ANYONE who's played Rick Dangerous will remember the network of horrific tricks and traps. This time around the going's even tougher. Traps can be set off from more than one area of the screen, stopped in motion, set off by other aliens and even able to generate aliens! Dave Pridmore's map editor shows how traps are put together – the white shaded boxes represent the traps (perhaps a missile launcher or ray gun), while the red boxes are the areas of the screen that Rick must enter to trigger the trap. The yellow boxes are triggers that can be activated by another object. In practice, this screen will be guarded by missiles along the top (the white boxes) and when Rick hits the first invisible red box, the first missile is launched, which then hits a yellow box on the floor, triggering the rest of the missiles.

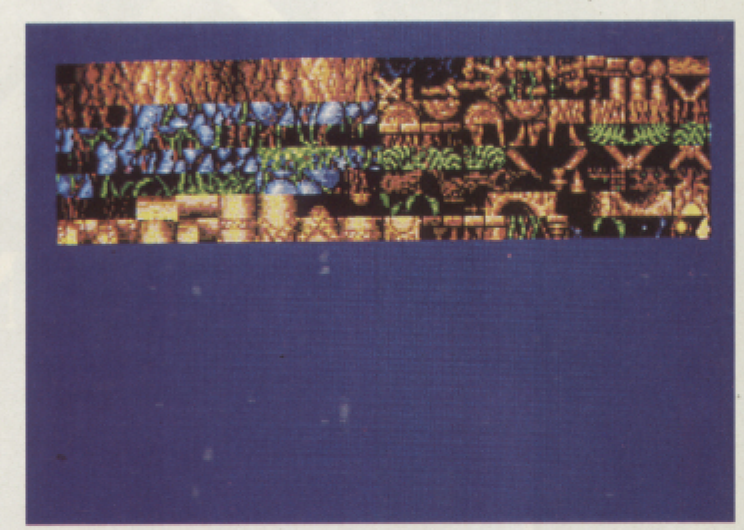
THE MAN with the hat is back! Only this time he's left it at home... Few computer characters have risen to international stardom and cult status as quickly as Rick Dangerous. The cute Indiana Jones-alike created in 1988 by Core Designers Simon Phipps and Terry Lloyd secured his place in computer folklore after just one game!

A homage to the corny B-Movie heroes of the '40s and '50s, Rick's dangerous platform-leaping and puzzle-solving antics in South America, Egypt, Nazi Germany and London took him to the top of the Gallup charts in the Summer of 1989 – and it's still regarded as one of the great 16-bit platform games today.

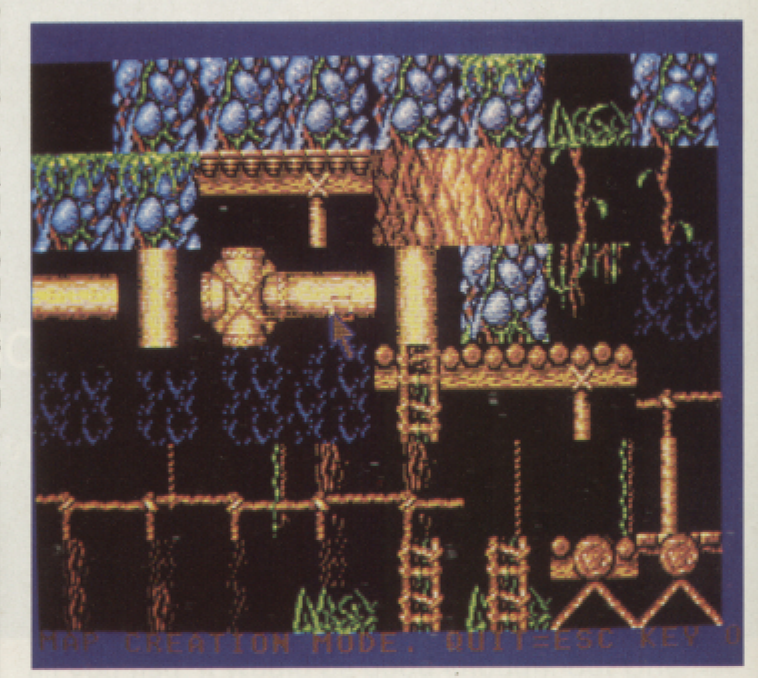
According to Rick's Designer Simon Phipps, the idea of a sequel never crossed his mind when he and Terry were creating the colossal-chinned adventurer. "We sat down and made a list of all the ideas that you could base a game around, like science fiction, medieval and so on, and looked for one that hadn't already been done. The Indiana Jones platform-style game was one that hadn't been touched on 16-bit, although there were some real corkers on the 64, like Bounty Bob Strikes Back – and so we created Rick."

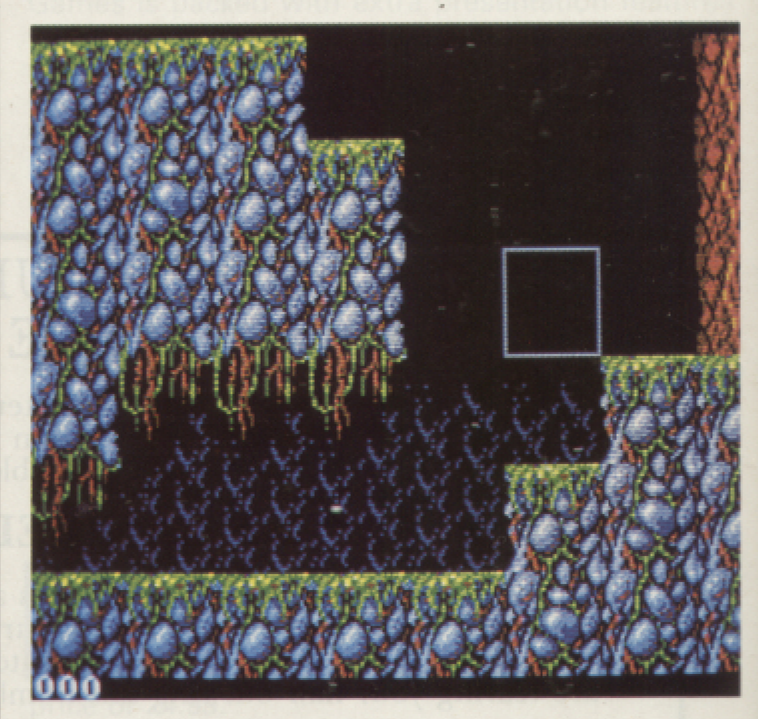
It was only towards the end of the four-month project that real ideas for a sequel began to form – hence the end sequence that paves the way for it. The story picks up directly from where the original Rick left off. Anyone who managed to complete Rick I without a cheat will have seen the elaborate final reward. Rick is hailed as a public hero and a presentation from the grateful people of the world follows outside the Houses Of Parliament. But just as everything is going swimmingly,



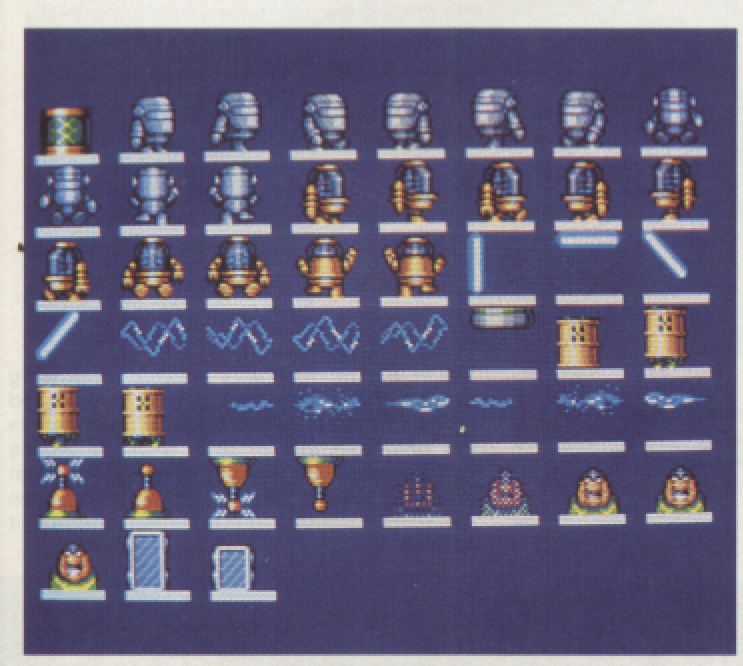


TERRY Lloyd is responsible for designing Rick II's background graphics, which he does with great help from Art Studio's map editor facility. The basic blocks of the Vegetablis kingdom (top) are built into larger landscape 'tiles' (centre), and then assembled using a custom-written program to produce a finished level (bottom).

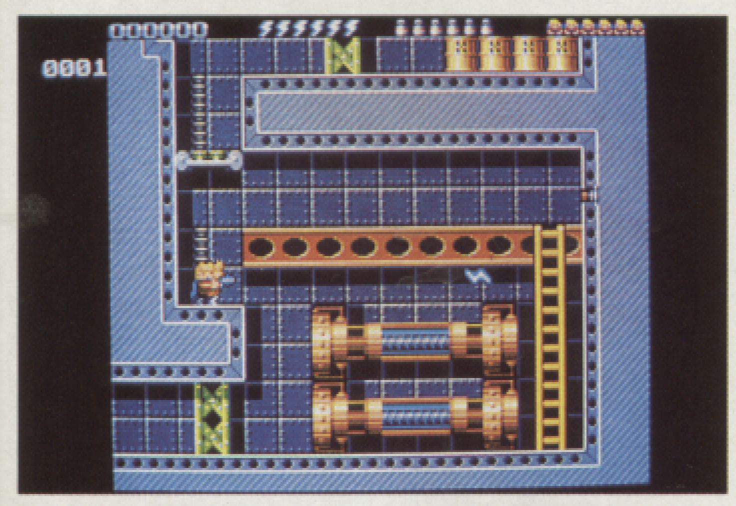




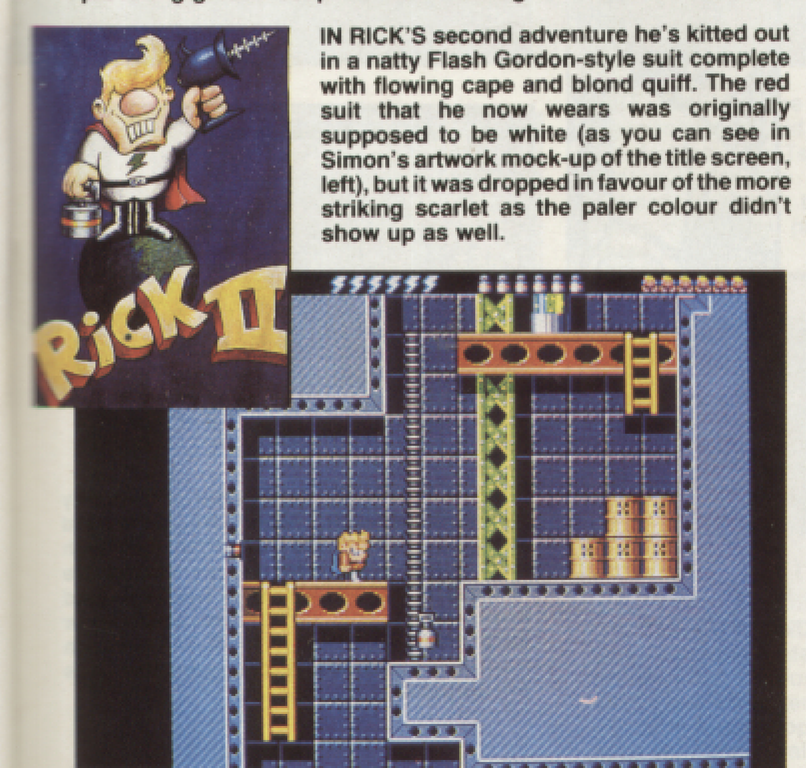
EN AT WORK



THIS selection of miscellaneous sprites shows what you can expect from Level One's adversaries. "The two main aliens for level one are based on two famous science-fiction robots," Simon reveals. "One is the huge silver guy from The Day The Earth Stood Still, and the other is Robbie The Robot from Forbidden Planet."



SIMON felt that the weapon system worked so well in the original that it would be a shame to change it too much. Thus, Rick's trusty six-shooter has been replaced by an electric ray-gun, and the dynamite is now a more futuristic alien detonator. As for the famous poking stick – that's now a good old fashioned punch. The only major change is that the detonators can be slid along the floor, providing greater scope for alien wastage.



IN RICK'S second adventure he's kitted out in a natty Flash Gordon-style suit complete with flowing cape and blond quiff. The red suit that he now wears was originally supposed to be white (as you can see in Simon's artwork mock-up of the title screen, left), but it was dropped in favour of the more striking scarlet as the paler colour didn't show up as well.



BEFORE committing himself to Art Studio, Simon decided to test out some of his ideas on paper. These scenes show Rick in some of his more athletic poses – leaping over robots and plants, melting ice monsters on Freezia and even turning the table on the Fat Man's guards by using the space fortresses' defences against them.

a fleet of alien spaceships appears above them and lands in Hyde Park!

It would seem that the evil Fat Man is back. While Rick's been dangerous around the world, Fatty's been busy building a huge fortress in space and making friends with unsavoury alien types. Now the combined forces of the two super-villains have landed on earth with the intention of invasion and it's up to Rick to put a stop to it – again.

The original Rick was based on the Indiana Jones-style adventure movies of the '40s and '50s. Inspiration for this sequel, however, came from the Flash Gordon movies of the same era. "Although," adds Simon, "it's not solely based on Flash. There are a lot of elements from the other space-based movies and characters of the time, including Dan Dare and Forbidden Planet."

This time round, Rick's got five levels to get through instead of four. The first takes him into one of the alien's motherships, where his task is to reach the control centre and use it to take him to the Fat Man's lair. In the second scene, the spaceship that Rick successfully managed to hotwire successfully crash-lands on the Ice Kingdom of Freezia (from Flash Gordon's Frigia) from which he then has to escape.

Things don't get any better on the third level, where a miscalculated teleport jump beams him onto the forest world of Vegetablia (again, taken from a Flash Gordon kingdom – Arboria). After battling his way through the mutant vegetables, Rick then makes it to Level Four – the Mud Mines Of Barfalatropolis, where subterranean peril lurks around every corner.

The final level is the laboratories of the Fat Man himself, and the finale promises to be an epic struggle between good and evil. Or perhaps it will be something else.

"When we produced the original Rick Dangerous, we came up with a lot of stuff that we thought we just couldn't do, and so we had to look for way around the problems," Simon reveals. "That happened mostly with the trap system, but with the sequel we've minimised that kind of thing, and so there's a lot of stuff now that we had to miss out of the original. The trickiest thing was improving the game and adding new features without going too far and spoiling the feel that made it work."

Although some of the levels are still to be designed, Simon has already decided that the puzzle-solving element will be more intense than in the original – something that the improved trap system allows him to do. "Something we weren't too happy about with the first game was the areas of really nasty gameplay – there was one particular jump on Level Two for example, which needed hellish timing. I think it had a tendency to throw you in at the deep end at certain points. I was quite pleased with Level One – I thought that was jolly, so this one's going to be a bit more like that."

With the original Rick Dangerous proving phenomenally successful and the sequel poised to follow in its footsteps, what are the prospects for a third installment in the saga? "I really don't know," Simon admits. "It's entirely MicroProse's decision, and I think that their decision rests a lot on how well the second game does. I'd very much like to do a third game though, as I've got some nice ideas. What I'd like to do would be to carry on the '40s and '50s feel, but this time with something in the detective vein, based on Bogart or Dick Tracy. We'll be leaving the end sequence of Rick II open just in case."

Rick Tracy. Now there's a thought...

PROJECT
Wonderland
PUBLISHER
Virgin Games
AUTHOR
Magnetic Scrolls

David Bishop (Concept & Design)

Anita Sinclair, Ken Gordon (Game Implementation)

Hugh Steers (Parser, Coding, Windows)

Doug Rabson (Window System)

Paul Finley (Map & Help Coding)

Mark Taylor (Compression, Conversions, Memory Management)

Richard Huddy (PC Programming)

Chris Kent, Alan Hunniset, Geoff Quilley (Graphics)

Steve Lacey (Amiga Programming)

INITIATED
December '87

RELEASE

AMIGA
September

ATARI ST
September

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
September

A Noun Like Alice

So you thought that the text adventure was dead, eh? Magnetic Scrolls has spent the last three years preparing to prove you wrong – with a little help from Lewis Carroll. Gary Whitta goes through the looking glass...

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, and what use is a book,thought Alice, without pictures or conversations?

She was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid) whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain could be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close to her.

There was nothing very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!(when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waist-coat pocket and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat pocket or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment Alice went down after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again...

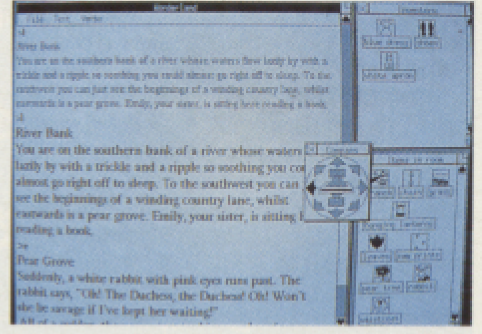
Extract from Alice In Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

AND SO begins Lewis Carroll's Alice In Wonderland, arguably the world's most famous children's story. It's also the subject of British adventure producer Magnetic Scrolls' biggest project to date. The company that almost single-handedly re-established the adventure as a popular genre five years ago with **The Pawn** (and later, **Guild Of Thieves, Jinxter, Corruption** and **Fish!**) has been so quiet over the last couple of years that you'd be forgiven for thinking that it died out along with the type of game it produces.

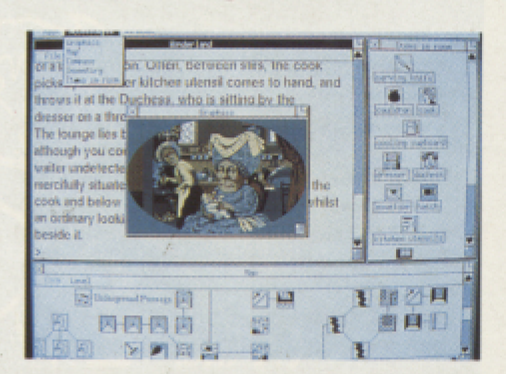
It turns out that the team's been silently beavering away on **Wonderland**, and the only reason nobody knew about it is simply because they didn't tell anyone – until recently.

And while Magnetic Scrolls only really 'cocooned' into silence after the release of Fish!, just under two years ago, the story behind Wonderland goes back much further than that. While previous Magnetic Scrolls products have had an average development time of around 18 months, Wonderland is now only nearing completion three years after it was conceived by Project Manager David Bishop, who explains exactly what happened.

"I've always adored Alice In Wonderland, and I've always wanted to do a game based on it," he explains, adding that it's strange that no-one's ever tackled the Alice scenario properly before, given that it lends itself so ideally to computer game conversion. "The subject's only been very vaguely touched on in the past, and both times they were just poor arcade games that didn't make any use of the story. Everyone knows the Alice story, but the main reason why it's so ideal for an



EVEN Wonderland's text is flexible. It can be readjusted to many typefaces and sizes, from tiny typewriter-style right up to huge newspaper headlines. If it's something more practical you want, there are also full word processor-style cut and paste facilities. If you come across an elaborate name and don't fancy the task of typing it, just 'cut' it out and, when the opportunity arises, you can simply 'paste' it right back in.

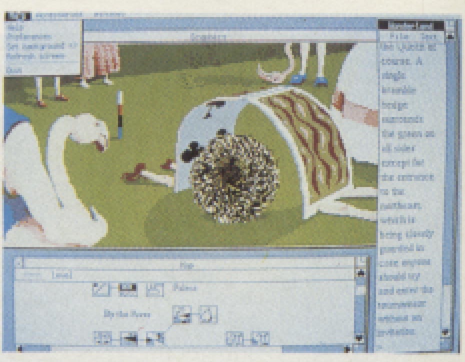


THE DEFAULT size for the graphics window is comparatively small, leaving more room for the rest of the displays and giving the graphics a sharper image (of course you can always place the other displays behind the graphics window so as not to infringe on the detail). But if it's a more dynamic display you want...



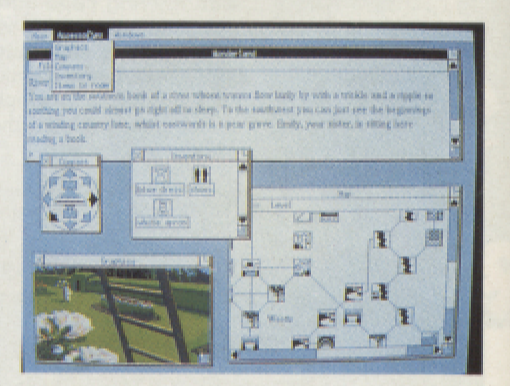
Presto! The graphics window is doubled in size at a stroke. It's slightly chunkier as a result, so it's up to the user to decide which size is preferred.





SUCH IS the flexibility of the windowing system that everything inside is re-jigged when a frame is resized. The text window is the best example of this, with the words being re-justified inside the window so that you can always see the whole text, even when the frame is an inconvenient shape as it is here.





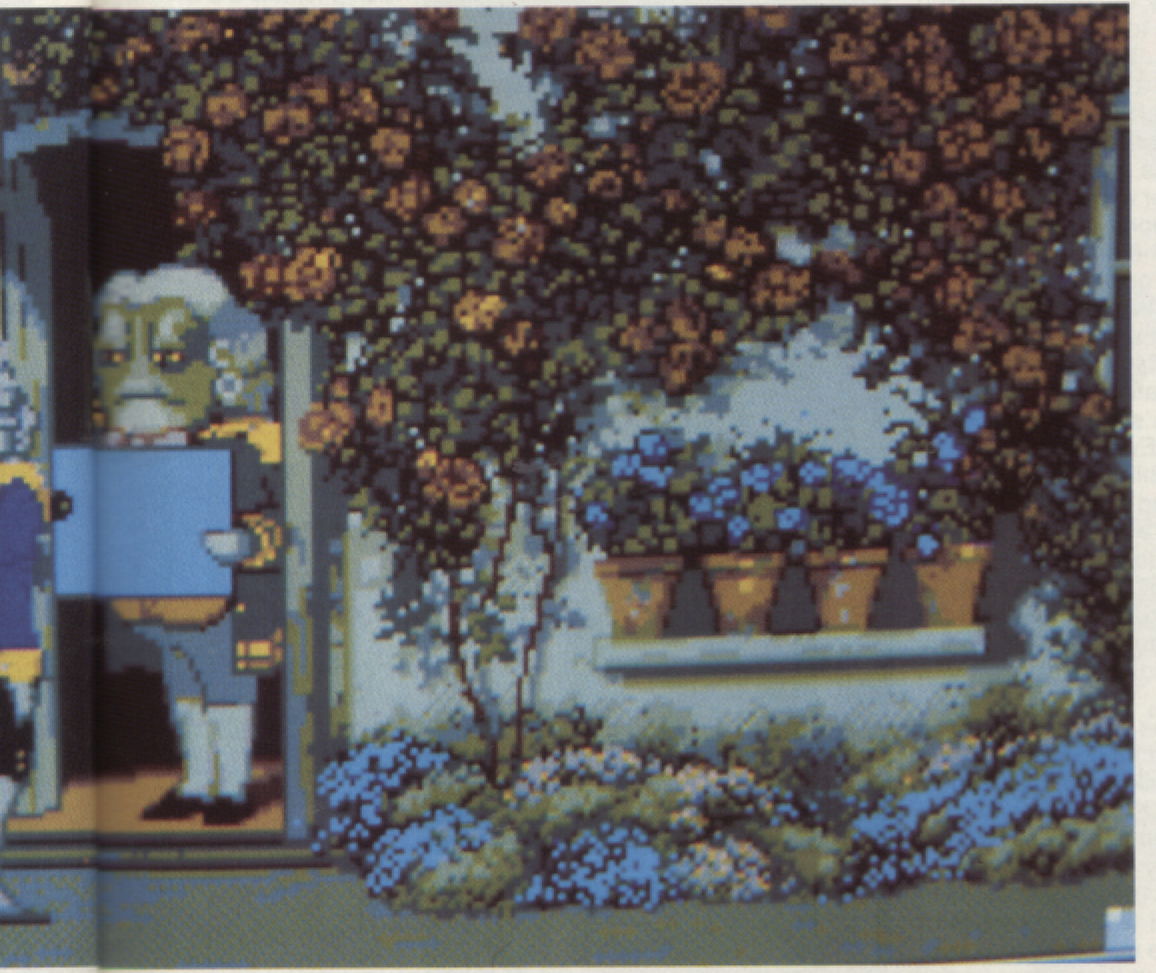
WONDERLAND'S self-mapping facility means that you don't have to wander around aimlessly looking for a location (although only places you have already visited are shown). Locations above or below ground level, for example an upstairs bedroom or cave network, are inset over the location from which they lead, thus keeping things as uncomplicated as possible.





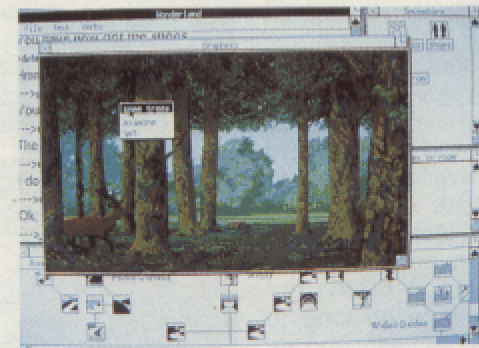


A NEW young artist by the name of Dermott Powers has produced the gorgeous cover illustration for Wonderland (centre) along with a selection of less elaborate but equally impressive pencil sketches, which eventually brighten up the pages of the manual. But not even Dermott can go straight to the easel with his ideas, and so everything is sketched out first – his original rough for the cover artwork is on the left.





JUST ONE of the gorgeous animation sequences that add to the atmosphere of Wonderland, with Tenniel's 'original' novel illustration on the left. Here the Fish-footman delivers the invitation to the Queen's croquet party to the Duchess' house.



THE WONDERLAND forest is the perfect place to demonstrate how moving objects in the graphics window can be manipulated just like any other item. Here, a deer has been caught in mid-gallop by the mouse and the menu listing the available options is already raring to go.

adventure game is the remarkable logic and character that it has. It's a very rich tapestry."

While Wonderland is of course based on Lewis Carroll's book, it's not a straight copy of the storyline. Instead it's a recreation of Lewis Carroll's Wonderland world, with the bizarre characters and locations and situations reproduced as authentically as possible.

The player is Alice, and the action unfolds as the book does, with the young lady sitting bored by the river bank with her sister, Emily – until Alice follows a talking rabbit through a gap in a hedge and into Wonderland. From then on everything is unreal as you attempt to dream your way through the mystical world and make it safely to the end. All of Carroll's most famous characters are there to be found and accosted, including the Mad Hatter and his equally mad friend the March Hare, the tyrant Queen, the Mock Turtle, the Cheshire Cat, The Duchess... the list goes on almost as long as the book does. But don't expect to see Tweedledum and Tweedledee, who only ever appeared in **Alice Through The Looking Glass**.

But the original story extends far beyond just the characters and locations – many of the puzzles are based around it, too. Remember the 'Drink Me' potion that makes Alice bigger and smaller? Here it's a vital element, as Alice has to adjust her size and weight to solve many of the game's problems.

Bearing in mind the 'nice' nature of the story, it's impossible for you to come to any serious harm as you travel through Wonderland. Since everything is a dream anyway, the worst that can happen is you wake up back by the riverbank and having to start again. Wonderland is a little over 110 locations in size (the biggest Magnetic Scrolls game ever, by the way) and David describes the puzzles that stand between you and success as ranging between very easy and very difficult. But then given the standard of past Magnetic Scrolls efforts, it's not going to be an easy ride anyway.

David first drew up an initial game specification back in late 1987, when he was a freelance game designer. He showed it to Magnetic Scroll's co-founder Anita Sinclair, who was quick to take on the project, adding some revolutionary ideas of her own in the form of a window, icon and menu system of execution. "At the time, I was working on my own game, where I wanted to have multiple windows working simultaneously," Anita reveals. "But when I saw Wonderland, it became obvious that it was a much better game than the one we were working on, so we shelved that and redefined the ideas that we had for it for Wonderland instead."

"The whole idea of the window system we've developed is to take adventures into the next generation. What we found was that people enjoyed the format of text adventures – it is, from a gameplay point of view, the most flexible genre there is – but the problem people had was that when you see a text adventure for the first time, it's not too obvious where to start or what to do, and the other problem is that people seem to have a huge aversion to typing. So what we wanted to do was to design a system where you can have all the flexibility of a text adventure game, but with neither of these problems."

The result is a system where all the information you need (and more) is displayed via a series of movable and sizable windows. It's a system similar in concept to the ones that control the Amiga and ST environments, where windows

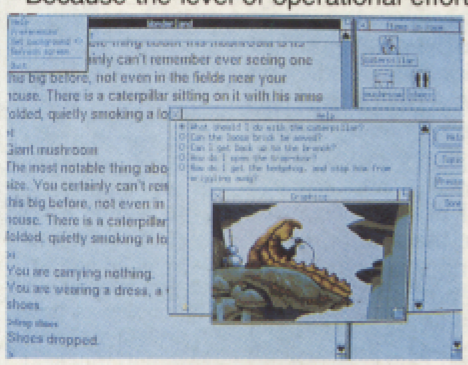


A HANDY 'tile' option has the computer shuffle all the current windows around in the tidiest and most space-efficient way. Once it's done, you can mess about with the display some more to produce your ideal set-up.

"The flexibility of the system means that anybody can use it with the minimum of practice, and that you can use it anyway you like. You can play it either as a straight text adventure with no windows or graphics, or play it mainly using the windows and icons system."

icons and boxes are dragged around to perform functions easily. But this system's much more sophisticated, as Anita is keen to point out: "The flexibility of the system means that anybody can use it with the minimum of practice, and that you can use it anyway you like. You can play it either as a straight text adventure with no windows or graphics, or play it mainly using the windows and icons system."

Because the level of operational effort



IN A SIMILAR style to Magnetic Scrolls' old cypheric hints, Wonderland features a comprehensive on-line help facility. There's no messing around typing in codes from a book – now all you do is select the problem you want from the HELP menu. Of course, it can be tempting to look up the answer every time you run into a problem and thus finish the game in a matter of hours, but Magnetic Scrolls is confident that most adventurers aren't so weak-willed.



MAGNETIC SCROLLS in all its glory. From left to right: Richard Huddy (complete with inflatable dinosaur), Mark Taylor, Chris Kent, Ken Gordon, Anita Sinclair (obscured by leaves and sporting the latest in Magnetic Scrolls designer stained-glass windows), David Bishop (also obscured by leaves), Paul Finley, and Doug Rabson. Camera-shy Hugh Steers is out of shot.

required is minimal, the player is left with more spare brain-power to apply to the puzzles. You can have as many windows as you like anywhere on the screen, and while this may sound like a fancy frill, it's actually an invaluable aid. Apart from the mandatory text window, there's a variable graphics window (more of that later), a compass for moving around, a self-drawing map to charter your movements, and two object windows – one for the objects you currently carry and one for the objects in your location. This means that you can move about the map with simple logical mouse clicks and no fear of getting lost through no fault of your own. It also means that object manipulation genuinely couldn't be easier. To pick up or drop an object, all you have to do is click on it and drag it from one window into another.

Sure, windows and icons have been employed by adventure games in the past, but none have ever been as flexible – or indeed useful – as this one. Magnetic Scrolls is confident that it will help to give Wonderland a much wider appeal by opening adventures up to people who normally wouldn't touch one with a boathook.

Producing such a complex system meant that the game itself and the windowing system were developed almost independently of one another, and were only meshed together when both were in a competent and functional state – not even David Bishop saw the two working as a single element until quite recently.

But if anything in Wonderland is more revolutionary than the windows, it's the graphics system. Magnetic Scrolls has always had a reputation for high-quality visuals, but here it's surpassed anything it's achieved before. Every location has an accompanying graphic (in the form of a window of course) and a good deal of them (especially those with creatures on screen) aren't so much pictures, but fully animating sequences. You can watch the Duchess' maid stirring the soup, sit back and observe the Mad Hatter's tea party and even see the wildlife running through Wonderland forest!

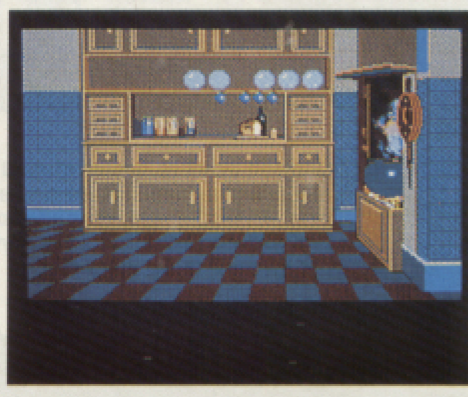
What's more, items and people seen in the graphic window can be selected and manipulated even while they move, and for extra aesthetic effect, the frame can be re-sized, allowing you to scroll around inside it, viewing only a small portion at a time (a sight that has to be experienced to be appreciated). But while the results of the new graphic style may be impressive, it's caused nothing but headaches for the graphics team, as artist Chris Kent explains: "Whereas before we just drew static screens, now that everything is animated we have to design screens as separate elements and then piece them together. It's harder work and it takes much longer to do, but the results are well worth it."

Given the amount of time and effort that Magnetic Scrolls has invested in its windowing and graphics systems, Wonderland will not be the only game to use it. All future products will be developed around the same system. A couple are already on the starting blocks now – not that Anita is going to say anything about them. "We don't believe in hyping our games, because they take so long to develop," she says. "Three years ago we could have told you we were developing a game called Wonderland, but you wouldn't have known any more than that until now, so what's the point?"

At least there's Wonderland to keep us busy...















THE INTRODUCTION of Magnetic Scrolls' new animated picture system means that the task of producing the visuals is more difficult – but ultimately more rewarding. A brief outlines the graphic requirements (in this case, it's "Do us the Duchess' Kitchen"), and a simple painting is produced to give an idea of how the screen will be composed (Picture A). With that in mind, it's off to Neochrome on the ST to produce some scenery (Picture B) and, as a separate picture, the animation frames for the characters in question (Pictures C & D) – in this case the Duchess, her baby and the maid. The characters are then combined with the scenery to produce an almost-finished screen (Picture E), before finally it's touched up and, in this case, mirrored and framed artistically, to produce the final animated screen (Picture F).


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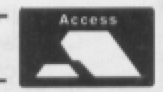
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AMIGA

All the Amiga ware featured this month come from Demon Software, Harbledown, Westland Green, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, SG11 2AQ.

ATARI ST

Scanners AVS is available from The Other PD Library, 108 Kenmare Road, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 3HQ.

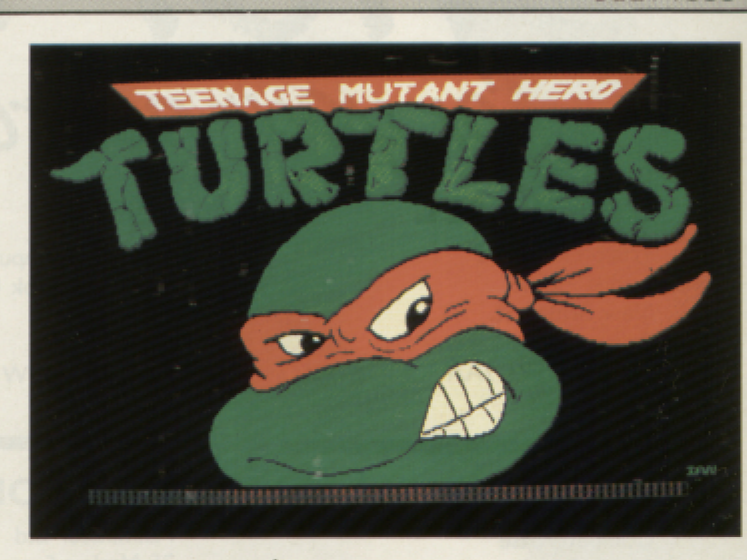
Riverdene PDL provided The Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles and Defcon 1. The address is 63 Wintringham Way, Purley On Thames, Reading, Berks, RG8 8BH.

Richard Hollins' work came direct from Richard Hollins at 7 Trevor Drive, Caverswall, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire, ST11 9ER.

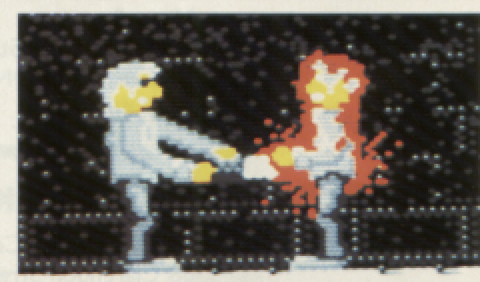
IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

Nothing doin' this time around. But! It looks like we might have some MD-DOS wares in time for the next issue.

DEMOS, Public Domain, Shareware, Freeware... Call it a load of old rubbish. Call it what you will. Hey, as long as computers are used for fun, the art of the demo will still be with us (ugh). So come on all you fun-lovin' Amiga, ST and PC artists (ho ho). Why not drop us a disk in the post of your finest digital daubs, ambitious animations, saucy sonics or all-round coding skills. Send them to: DEMOS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And don't forget to enclose a stamped addressed jiffy bag if you want your work returned.









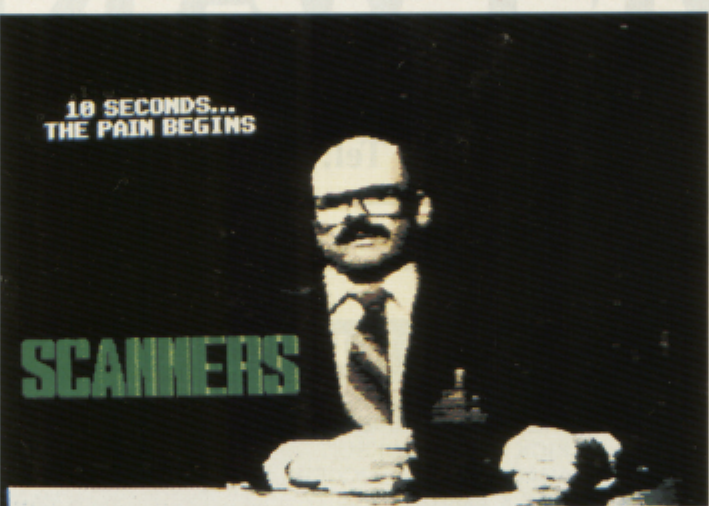


THE DEMO Of The Month Award goes to Scoopex for its 459th Annual Megademo. **Mental Hangover!** is a cascade of colour, a sizzling stream of sound, and a very deftly programmed piece of entertainment. Good use of graphics and an impressive display of programming skills, without too much emphasis on self congratulation. It shifts from piece to piece very smoothly with the minimum of delays for loading and the like, and no single item outstays its welcome. A first class bit of computer 'art' if ever there was one. The best bits are the stunning 'stencil vectors' (shapes filled with patterns which scroll in different directions!) and the amazing 'bubble starfield'. Brilliant.

The Bad Taste Award goes to Fraxion for **Revenge**. It's a series of seven Video Nasties in which a person is chopped with a hatchet, cut in half with a chainsaw and shot in various ways. A light-hearted commercial break (advertising chainsaws) punctuates the proceedings. Fun for the more perverse members of the family, especially with the facility to play the sequences back and forth via simplistic 'video' controls.

The **Rebels' Megademo**, the team's first since the brilliant **Subway**, is a little disappointing but still worth a look. The best bit is the way the lady animation from the **Newtek Demo Reel** is used as 'meters' for the tune!

On the music front there's plenty to choose from, with the lion's share of the credit going to Time Circle with **Music Disk**. A menu of 34 different tunes is on offer, all **Soundtracker**ed from the sound of it. The tunes vary from the plain to the delightful – basically there's something for everyone in there somewhere.





Cryptoburners' polygon display isn't as good as its 'gear' music, but there is some creditable animation. It says they weren't stolen from **Starglider**, but what were they borrowed from? Nice dolphin though. And as Rutger Hauer will tell you, it's not easy being one.

On the ST side there are four pieces to peruse – all rather good. There's a **Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles** picture and scrolling message, which wouldn't be much fun if its wasn't for the sampled tune from the television series. The best new ST stuff comes from Richard Hollins. This smart chap gives you control over a series of looped samples from Duran Duran's **All She Wants Is**, along with choice clips from the video. Richard's also provided a decent picture of **Roger Rabbit** and some tunes made with Microdeal's **Quartet** – which is very tastefully done.

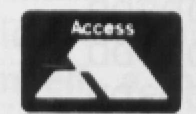
This is more than can be said for the **Scanners AVS Animation**. It's a trailer-like sequence digitised from the film Scanners and... well see it for yourself. Brilliant, but revolting. Finally on the ST there's the **Watchmen**. No, it's nothing from the graphic novel or the film. It's simply the name of the crew who did the deed. That said, a Watchmen Smiley logo does feature – along with a pleasant enough tune. And that yer lot!



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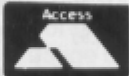
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FIGHTING TALK

Can Gordon Houghton unravel the mysteries of karate kicks and chop-socky flicks without causing himself a ninja-ry? Shuriken.



NO-ONE is entirely sure when and where martial arts originated, since few documented records exist. There are a couple of current tusslers for the title of founder: one was a fighter known as Vajramushti, a mercenary used by the Indian warrior class (the Kshatriya) in 1000 BC. His combat style was so effective that his techniques were soon copied in China and so spread to the world.

The second candidate reinforces the belief that the arts were born in India: Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism in the sixth century AD, reputedly journeyed across the Himalayas from India to China and taught the first martial art to the monks in the Shaolin Temple in China's Hunan province. It was little more than a form of controlled breathing, but the associated prestige has contributed to the temple's worldwide renown.

There are other, more nebulous clues, such as oriental statues dating back to the first century BC, depicting temple guardians adopting martial arts stances. The line stretches back further: Plato mentions an early Greek art similar to karate in 150 BC. In fact, the oldest martial art known to man is probably the Greek pankration (meaning 'all powers'): it's an ancient discipline developed from early forms of boxing and wrestling in which mind, spirit, hands and feet are combined in all-out combat. Similar to modern karate kata, it was an established Olympic sport in 648 BC.

Whatever their origins, martial arts in their pure form are not sports: skill and control serve the demands of traditional form and ritual. Their expression in competition is a relatively recent development – sport has added full physical contact, rules and macho ethics – but paradoxically, many of the modern arts developed from ancient and necessary techniques of self-defence. Traditionally these encompassed all forms of combat, with or without weaponry.

OCCIDENTAL TREATMENT

Martial arts weren't fully introduced in the West until the late '60s, when several coincidental events accelerated the process of acceptance: Nixon's visit to China, an ongoing revival of mysticism, the introduction of acupuncture in modern medical science, increasing street violence and the rise of Bruce Lee as the first Chinese-American film star. There were already a few karate schools in existence – Robert Trias claims to be the first, established in Phoenix in 1946 – but

SLICK KICKS AND THICK STICKS

APART from the three main Westernised martial arts there are hundreds of arts more widely practised in the Orient. This is just a selection of the more popular ones.

AIKIDO

FOUNDED in 1942 and based on nonresistance with an assailant. It has few attacking blows, concentrating on deflecting the opponent's strike.

ESCRIMA

THE MOST popular martial art in the Phillipines, best known for its use of two short sticks in combat.

JEET KUNE DO

BRUCE Lee's own invention – 'the way of the intercepting fist'. A hybrid of all martial arts, largely determined by the individual and stressing fluid motion and adaptability. The person is more important than the style.

JODO

'THE WAY of the staff', which came to its founder in a revelation in the 16th Century. The staff must be two metres long.

JUJUTSU

THE ART from which both judo and aikido took root: an early Japanese hand-to-hand combat discipline characterised by kicking, striking, joint-locking, throwing, holding, choking and use of weapons.

KENDO

MODERN Japanese fencing performed with bamboo swords and protective clothing. It reaches back to Japan's feudal days: by the late 1700s, sword practice was ritualised.

KICK-BOXING

THE NATIONAL sport in Thailand, once a hand-to-hand combat method used to supplement more traditional warfare.

KWONPUP

AN EARLY Chinese method of unarmed combat which spread to and was popularised in Korea from 1147-1170. It developed later into two advanced systems and was the earliest forerunner of taekwondo.

KYUDO

LITERALLY, 'the way of the bow' – an art dating from the Third Century AD. Success doesn't necessarily mean hitting the target: it's more a question of being in the right frame of mind when releasing the bow.

in the '60s the trickle became a flood. In the US alone it's now an industry estimated in billions of dollars.

Inevitably, this popularisation has pushed commercialism ahead of the more spiritual origins. Aside from tournaments, demonstrations, contact sport competition, clubs and police training, there are Bruce Lee T-shirts, hero posters, equipment and clothing, GI Joes with kung-fu grip, comics, TV panel talkies and, of course, computer games. At its height in the '70s, the American martial arts industry spawned 13 active magazines and two massive dojos – one in New York (32,000 square feet of floorspace) and New Jersey (sitting on 34 acres of land).

BELT UP

Many ancient elements are still retained however, the most obvious of which is the system of awarding belts according to rank. When karate originated all belts were white: since it was never washed, the belt gradually became black over a period of years from accumulation of soil and sweat. When the coloured-belt system was instituted it followed tradition by having its colour become darker as a student advanced in rank, thus implying experience. Physical prowess isn't the sole qualification, though: in most classical styles a practitioner can't attain a black belt until 16 or 17 (in America, children as young as nine held the coveted rank purely for publicity stunts), and there are only a score or so 10th–grade black belts alive today. Famous karate black belts include Sean Connery and Elvis Presley, and Jimmy Connors has launched a kick or two in his time.

The bow, retained as the formal start of a bout, is a traditional gesture of respect when addressing someone of higher rank. Mastering the art of breathing is still emphasised because in conjunction with the execution of a technique it increases striking power – it's also used for relaxed meditation and during dynamic-tension kata. This last discipline involves the standard macho pose of a practitioner tightening his body whilst an assistant strikes him with maximum power to test his endurance.

MARTIAL LORE

THE THREE most widely practiced martial arts disciplines are karate, judo and kung-fu.

KARATE

KARATE literally means 'empty hand' or 'China hand', and stemmed from the Okinawan word 'te' (hand). 'Te' was the influential form of unarmed self-defence used by Okinawan peasant farmers.

Karate dictates that three qualities determine the effectiveness of a fighter: confidence, desire and physical/mental ability. Its practitioners go barefoot because on the island of Okinawa, where the art originated, the terrain consisted of soft sand, which led to karate experts developing tough calluses on the soles of their feet. Even now, many hardened followers develop large knuckles three times normal size by rubbing their hands on rough surfaces: one technique involves stabbing the hand into a bag of rice to develop coarseness, then into a bag of beans when the skin is tough enough.

Karate uniforms are made of lightweight fabric for durability and speed – factors required in the art itself. It's a discipline widely known for its chop, or 'shuto' (knife hand): it's even claimed that there were times in Japan when experts had to register their hands as weapons at the local police station.

Though the reverse punch is the most commonly used technique, the karate kick is the most spectacular. Practitioners never kick with their toes: these are turned upwards, and it's the ball of the foot that strikes an opponent. The discipline emphasises that stance is important for mobility and stability, and teaches that maximum power is achieved through speed rather than mass – the force of a karate punch is reputedly equal to a sledgehammer blow.

There are literally dozens of karate subdivisions, including Korean taekwondo and Sport Karate. This latter version is divided into non-contact, semi-contact and full contact competition, but it wasn't until 1968 that rules were fully established and excessive contact was penalised.

The Professional Karate Association was founded in 1974, and at its height one fight attracted 50 million viewers worldwide. The sport is also unique in using the roundhouse kick, the only one that can be brought around an opponent's hands to strike the face or body. Stars of karate tournaments adopt nicknames like stars of the wrestling ring: Monster Man, Giant Killer and The Golden Greek have all kicked skin together.

More famous than any of them though, is Japan's Mas Oyama. He specialised in karate demonstrations against bulls, and in his lifetime fought 52 of them, severing the horns from 48 and killing four others that were marked for slaughter. Karate experts are better known for breaking boards than bulls, and the current world record is 2,000 roofing tiles smashed in three and a half minutes by a British quartet.



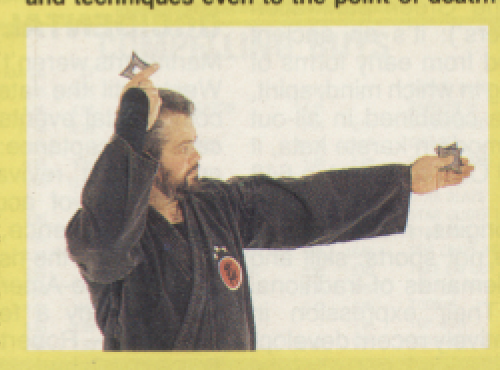
THE FIRST NINJA

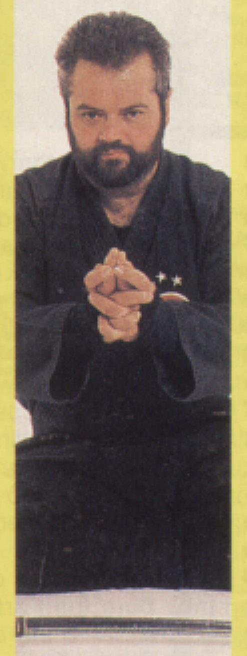
THE MOST celebrated martial artists in films, games, comics or real life are the enigmatic ninjas. The word literally means 'invisible assassin', and was most meaningfully applied to a group of specially trained military spies in 17th Century Japan. Their art, ninjutsu, originated between 500 and 300 BC, and combined bushido discipline with numerous martial arts practices.

In 400 BC the famous treatise of General Sun Tzu called The Art Of War established the classic ninja code of practice: appear, harass the enemy then melt into the background. Within the framework of this tactic there are many detailed requirements: a ninja must remain concealed, attack without warning, escape and hide. A ninja needed an all-round knowledge of people, places, terrain, psychology, medicine, poison and a wide range of weapons.

The ninja clans lived in close-knit communities with a hierarchical structure. Scrolls outlining the code were their most treasured possession, and a strict rule of silence and secrecy was observed throughout their history. Children born into the Iga and Koga clans, two of the most powerful ninjutsu organisations, were particularly trained in sophisticated methods of escape: remaining underwater for several minutes at a time, climbing cliffs and walls like human flies, deceiving pursuers by appearing dead, displacing their joints to slip out of knots, and predicting meteorological conditions to their advantage. Clan honour is legendary: ninjas reputedly bit off their tongues and bled to death in captivity rather than submitting to torture and confession.

The uniform is designed to match the code: soft boots divide the big toe from the rest to ease climbing. Black, heavy-duty uniforms have extended sleeves to cover pale hands at night. And the famous hoods (now hardly ever worn) only revealed the whites of their eyes. A ninja concealed his name, objectives and techniques even to the point of death:





one never appeared in public without disguise.

Their weapons and tools are many and varied: a short staff (hanbo), metal claws for climbing and defence, chains weighted at one end, and powder which can be blown into an enemy's eyes. The ninjutsu student also studies most of the recognised Japanese martial arts weapons, as well as unarmed combat techniques – anything the body can do to preserve itself is seen as legitimate. The most controversial ninja weapon – the shuriken – was used not only as a direct missile but also for scattering beneath the feet of horses. They were dropped from aeroplanes in World War I, and even caused their fair share of problems on the software scene... System 3 provided a rubber shuriken star with its 8-bit incarnations of The Last Ninja 2. The 'weapon' was promptly banned by WH Smiths.

In recent years the movement has undergone a dramatic change of heart under the leadership of Dr Masaaki Hatsumi: the ninja are now presented as men and women who are trying to help one another and society, still using sophisticated forms of martial arts. Meanwhile, US authorities such as the FBI have resurrected ninja techniques, and the Green Berets and SAC teams of the '50s both used a martial arts training programme not dissimilar to ninjutsu.



JUDO

FOUNDED in the late 1800s, judo is by far the most organised and structured of the martial arts, having developed from a secretive fighting discipline into an Olympic sport (it's one of Japan's national sports, so was first accepted in 1964 in Tokyo). It's also the first martial art to have reached the outside world from the East. Judo is one of the 'Budo' family – the encompassing term for the 'do' arts such as judo, kyudo and aikido – and means 'to stop conflict' or 'gentle way'. It stems from earlier arts such as jujutsu-ryu and shorin-ryu.

The uniform (gi) is heavy because it has to withstand severe tugging at the lapels where players grip to execute throws. It's white because that colour symbolises purity. Three factors compose a judo throw: kuzushi (putting off balance), tsukuri (entry) and atemi waza (execution). The all-important movements to learn are the breakfalls – learning to fall without injury. Its study is divided into four major parts: throwing, grappling, striking and resurrection techniques.

Jigoro Kano, its founder, determined that its ultimate goal should be to achieve the harmonious development and eventual perfection of the human character. This explains why no one has ever achieved the ultimate 12th grade black belt (fifth degree black belt and above are honorary awards). Famous practitioners include Theodore Roosevelt and James Cagney.



KUNG–FU

ANIMAL movement and the reactions of animals in battle with other creatures is what inspired kung-fu. Observing the way a cat can defeat a much larger animal by an instinctive thrust of the claw to the eyes led to kung-fu's open-hand eye-slash.

There are hundreds of different styles but only five fundamental sources of inspiration from the animal kingdom. The crane provides balance and quick foot movements, the dragon spiritual grace and flexibility. The leopard is a model of strength and power, the tiger an example of clawing exercises and bone-building. Finally, there's the snake which inspires the development of inner power in order to make pinpoint strikes on body targets. This inner power is a vital element: America's Karate Illustrated Magazine once ran a story about a 107-year old master who, simply by the movements of his hand could make a man standing across the room flinch and waver.

One of its most famous moves is the iron palm, which reputedly enables a fighter to attain an internal physical heat which is projected via the palms, creating a deadly weapon – the forerunner of the 'death touch'.

Unlike karate, practitioners wear shoes: traditionally the discipline was practised on rocky and uneven land – footwear prevented lacerations.

The term kung-fu actually means the time spent by a person to perform a specific task, and it relates to the legend of graduation from the Shaolin Temple. A student had to pass three tests: the first was an oral kung-fu history and philosophy examination. The second test was a journey through a booby-trapped hallway, lined with 108 dummies armed with weapons and triggered, and the third involved the student lifting a 500-lb smouldering urn, which burnt into the flesh two indelibly sculptured symbols of a tiger and dragon.



KICKS, CHOPS AND CHIPS

A VAST range of 16-bit games employ fighting elements, but few are out-and-out pure oriental beat 'em ups. Until very recently this latter category relied, give or take a move, on the 16-move standard (the maximum number of joystick positions, doubled in conjunction with the fire button). Games such as **Budokan** and **Oriental Games** look set to redefine the genre: multiple disciplines, tournament structures, programmable moves and a wide range of kicks, punches and head-butts have given the form a new lease of life.

But what makes a good beat 'em up in the first place? It's a diverse combination, but the essentials appear to be polished presentation, pixel perfect accuracy and intelligent computer opponents.

Archer Maclean, programmer of the original 8-bit **International Karate** and the 16-bit incarnations of **IK**, equates a good beat 'em up with a good game: "They need an awful lot of care and attention – games these days are just so poorly produced." He places the computer's response above everything else: "It's got to realise what you're doing on a frame-by-frame basis. It shouldn't play randomly, but intelligently – and everything's got to be carefully scaled, so that as the game gets harder, the accuracy and speed of the computer's decisions has to get better."

In IK+, the computer always knows how far away you are to the nearest pixel and how far each of your main hit centres are. It's also constantly consulting a table of punches which are guaranteed to floor you and makes better decisions the higher you progress through the levels (at level 30 it's 100% accurate, and you either have to constantly move quickly, block or run). He doesn't agree with multi-loading beat 'em ups, which is why he programmed IK+ with a very simple restart feature: "You're never in a position where you're not sure what's going on."

The one fault with some beat 'em ups is that repeated patterns can always floor opponents: IK+ was programmed to detect such patterns: "The computer either jumps out of the way very quickly or interprets the move and counters with a blow to floor you – so if you did a repeated foot sweep, it would shin kick you."

Kevin Buckner, programmer of MicroProse's Oriental Games, considers the relationship between human and computer opponents as the most vital aspect in the success of a beat 'em up: "It's no good if you have to resort to waggling the joystick and hoping for the best – you need something which involves a high level of computer intelligence."

Buckner regards the technical aspects of programming a beat 'em up as less important to tweaking the gameplay: "Getting the gameplay just right was by far the hardest part – that includes moves, sequence moves and computer intelligence, and grading them all for every level." The only other beat 'em up he rates is Budokan: "It has some really nice graphic touches."

Steve Bak, programmer of Microdeal's **Karate Kid II** also rates the skill factor: "The more you play it the better you should become, so that players who play it a lot will be able to beat novices. Computer opponents should be progressively more difficult: what you definitely shouldn't get is the standard move procedure where you could always beat an opponent – like **Yie-Ar Kung Fu** on the 64, where you could get through the first three opponents easily." He got round this problem in Karate Kid II by having the computer shift its x-position slightly, so that repeated moves would never make constant contact.





BASH, SLASH OR THRASH?

MARTIAL arts weaponry is amongst the most inventive the world has seen: because its armoury was often born out of necessity, any tool became a subtle extension of its wielder's fighting power. When the Japanese invaded Okinawa weapons were forbidden, so the Okinawan peasant farmers developed five basic farm implements which doubled as weapons, hiding them using kobudo (way of the weapons). These implements were the bo (a wooden stave, six feet long), sai (a kind of fork/dagger), nunchaku (rice flail), kama (sickle) and tonfa (a short stick with handle grip).

SAMBO
A RUSSIAN form of wrestling similar to judo.

SUMO
WRESTLING with very simple rules: a victory is scored when any part of the body other than the feet contacts with the ground. Contestants often weigh more than 400lbs.

T'AI CHI CHUAN
CREATED as a form of pugilism, it has evolved into a calisthenic exercise. It's characterised by a deliberate slow-motion movement that is continuous, circular and rhythmic.

WUSHU
KUNG-FU Communist-style. Chinese Communists turned the martial art into martial athletics and communal expression to create a spirit of friendship and excellence.

SOME MARTIAL ARTS TERMS EXPLAINED...

BUSHIDO
Literally, 'the way of the warrior'. A code of ethical behaviour followed by the samurai, whose main principle was loyalty to one's lord. The ultimate honour was to die in his service.

DAN
Rank in the belt system.

DOJO
A training hall where martial arts are taught.

DRUNKEN
A term applied to a movement which indicates that it is the manner of performance which distinguishes it, rather than the act itself.

HWARANG
Eighth century Korean patriots who, much like samurai warriors in Japan, adhered to a strict philosophical and moral code of ethics. They practiced hwarang-do 'the way of the flower of manhood'.

HYUNG
Korean name for form. The Japanese equivalent is 'kata'; the Chinese equivalent, 'kuen'.

KARATEKA
A karate man – practitioner of karate.

KATA
Formal exercises.

KI
Air, breath or spirit: the centralised energy of the body focussed to perform physical feats.

OS
A common greeting in Japanese karate circles, which means anything from 'never give up' to 'good morning'.



A BUNCH OF FIVE

For games which stick to traditional oriental beat 'em up action with a wide variety of moves and innovative techniques, you'd have to launch a hefty flying kick to topple this quintet... **Bruce Lee Lives**, Budokan, **Chambers Of Shaolin**, IK+, and Oriental Games are the best of the bunch. Even amongst these five, Budokan and Oriental Games kick higher, break more blocks and win more trophies than the other three, though IK+ would feature highly in anyone's fun chart. Of the other games mentioned here, not all are true beat 'em ups – most incorporate martial arts action as a large part of the gameplay.



BANGKOK KNIGHTS

SYSTEM 3's poor attempt at a kick-boxing simulation is characterised by large, crude-looking sprites and little else. It ranks as one of the least playable martial arts games around.



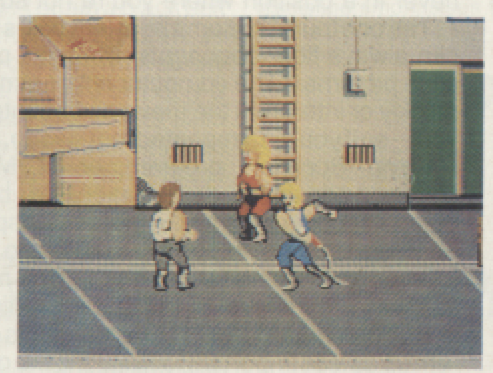
BUDOKAN

ELECTRONIC Arts novel beat 'em up is one of the first to achieve a wide range of moves: karate has 31, kendo 34, nunchaku 34, and bo 39. As well as the four disciplines, it also features a one or two-player training ground, three difficulty levels and a full tournament proper. Presentation, apart from an occasionally irksome loader, is excellent, with handy tips and emphasis on personal ki as a measure of success. Animation and sound effects are excellent throughout, and the backdrops very well drawn. The intelligence level is neatly balanced: early tournament rounds aren't too tough, but it takes massive amounts of skill and perseverance to reach the top. Highly recommended for its variety, accuracy, superb animation and a great Rob Hubbard soundtrack.



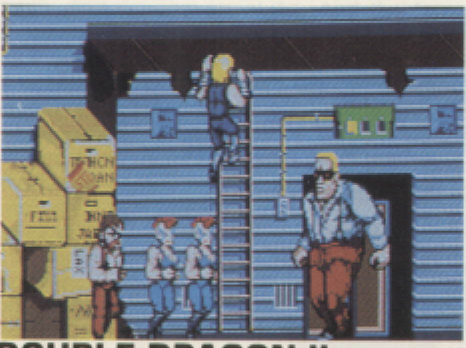
CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN

UNLIKE most beat 'em ups, Thalion's features a lengthy training session before you are even allowed into the game proper. This is essentially a passage through the six Chambers Of Shaolin, each one aimed at a particular ability like balance, speed or strength, and featuring such events as jumping between four rising and sinking poles, dodging flying objects, kicking burning baskets off a wooden bridge and chopping through boards. Having developed your skills, you can then save your characters to disk - either for use against another human opponent or in the set task of saving your kidnapped sister. As well as the bog-standard moves there are some excellent specials such as Tigerclaw and splits. In fact, its only major drawback is ropey animation.



DOUBLE DRAGON

IT WAS no laughing matter when the Shadow Boss abducted your true love to his Black Warrior hideout. Donning your deadly karate slippers you obligingly set off to the rescue. The Shadow Boss's gang has been posted along the route to duff you up, but little do they know that your hands and feet could stop a rhino in full charge. To get the girl you have to battle your way through some pretty easy left to right scrolling stages to the hideout itself, picking up handy weapons such as chains along the way. Melbourne House's conversions of the Tecmo coin-op are poor: the title screen and music are the same as the original, but the similarity ends there. Gameplay is far too easy, with moves limited to basic kicking and punching actions against feeble opposition. To cap it all, the whole package is strangled by an annoying multiload.



DOUBLE DRAGON II

UNLIKE its miserable predecessor, Virgin Game's conversion of **DDII** is competent and fun. The plot is irrelevant – but for what it's worth, you (Billy) and a chum (Jimmy) have been called back from the luxurious life you enjoyed as a result of the first game to defeat the dreaded Linda. This unholy harridan has managed to resurrect her evil chums from **Double Dragon** using some devious Oriental magic, has killed your chum-ess Marian and imprisoned her soul. And what does that mean? Kung Fu City: some unique and useful moves include a flying back kick, spin kick, elbow and a spectacular whirlwind kick. Weapons include whips, thrown objects such as knives, spades, powerballs, chains, boxes, grenades and logs. But there's a twist: in the end our pocket heroes must defeat their own selves in order to resurrect Marian...



DRAGON NINJA

IMAGINE'S **Dragon Ninja** captures the Data East coin-op's simple gameplay whilst sacrificing some of its graphical excellence. Sporting only a pair of Persil-white trousers and a low-cut black T-shirt, you are launched on a series of missions designed to test your ability to kick face and chuck knife. The time limits are strict and you only have your arms, legs and quick reflexes to protect you. The earliest couple of missions illustrate the point: the first has you stalking city streets, biffing bad guys and giving gang leaders a good seeing-to – the second is wholly on the back of a passing truck which has just abducted the President. For all its conversion qualities, the basic action is much like many other games of this ilk: multi-level progressive kicking, few moves, sporadic fighting, and rolling heads.



HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

LIKE **Vigilante**, **HKM** was part of US Gold's flirtation with a 14.99 price tag – a relationship which ended after a mere few weeks. HKM plays like the Siamese twin of **Street Fighter** and stars Kwon, a long-legged Korean kick-boxer who likes nothing better than showing off and booting seven shades out of everyone else in the entire world. His opponents include an irate bull, a sorely irked dog and – unusually for this type of game – a woman. A taster of the gameplay's negative points includes poor animation, annoying sound, a tortuous multiload and frustrating difficulty. For a more complete list, take a look at the game itself. On second thoughts – don't.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE

ARCHER Maclean's classic has been around on various formats since mid-1986. For reasons best to known to itself, System 3 decided to convert it only to the ST and PC. Unlike its excellent successor, it features a standard one-on-one bout played against a variety of backgrounds such as London, Athens, New York and Sydney. Containing a mere 13 moves, it's nonetheless quite slick and allows you to rearrange features, break shins, launch flying kicks, unleash punches and perform somersaults. Depending on how well a move is executed, a half or full point is awarded – the first player to gain two full points is declared the winner. Bouts last 30 seconds and time remaining is converted into bonus points. By winning two bouts you are automatically promoted to a higher belt. Even though it's been overshadowed by its superior successor, IK can still hold its head up with the rest of them.



IK+

ARCHER Maclean's polished and playable beat 'em up is still one of the best. With three-opponent simultaneous action, some incredibly tough later levels, adjustable speed and difficulty, extra presentation points (such as the gorgeous backdrops and the ability to drop competitors' trousers) and pixel-perfect collision detection, it's everything a no-holds-barred beat 'em up should be. It's even more compelling with two human players. Every third tournament is one of two bonus stages: deflecting balls of increasing speed and variable bounce with a shield, or kicking bombs off-screen before they explode. Its only drawback from a purist's viewpoint is that each player is capable of only 17 different moves in two directions (including head-butt and flying kicks) – but for sheer enjoyment, you won't get any better.

KARATE KID II

MICRODEAL's effort was one of the first beat 'em ups on 16-bit, and one of the first to utilise computer 'cheating'. Programmed by the ubiquitous Steve Bak, it tackles the major pitfall of any beat 'em up head on: the problem of repeated moves by a human opponent allowing him to win every bout. Bak's computer opponents leap back a couple of pixels if you attempt the same move twice – they also have enough built-in intelligence to render random joystick waggling ineffective. The game is actually a sequel without a prequel, based on the film of the same name. It doesn't much follow the film's plot though: on the screen, wise old Oriental mentor Miyagi (Noriyuki Morita) takes the Karate Kid (in real life, 24-year old Ralph Macchio) to Okinawa, where he's obliged to straighten out his dying father's estate. The game features Macchio's character Daniel LaRusso attempting to defeat ever more powerful adversaries: in effect, it's a one or two-player standard beat 'em up with 16 moves including the classic karate kick -

the roundhouse. On the graphics front, both the sprites and the backdrops (which change every level in the style of IK) seem quite crude, but once they animate the effect is reasonably life-like. A game worth checking out as much for nostalgia as for its addictive qualities.



THE NINJA WARRIORS

PROGRAMMED by The Sales Curve, the plot of this conversion of the three-screen Taito coin-op is simple: in 1993 Bangler has schemed his way to the Presidency of the whole world and disposed of all traces of democracy and opposition. Mulk, an underground scientist, is the world's only hope: he's created two ninja warriors from molybdeno-titanium, the pair of them controlled by remote console links. Having these console links in the comfort of your own home, it's your task to conquer five zones and Bangler's hideout – who cares about the dogs, mutant hunchbacks and shrieking ninja opponents? It's a smooth conversion of a reasonable coin-op, which makes it one of the less inspiring progressive beat 'em ups around. It's great fun, but with only eight moves and some sluggish action, its lastability is called into question.



NINJA SPIRIT

THIS Activision conversion of an obscure Irem coin-op is recommended for dedicated fans of the original. Slipping into the black hood and slippers of a ninja, your occupation is to rid the world of a tribe of Eastern bad guys. A quartet of weapons are to hand – a sword, Deathstar, dynamite and a lassoon razor blade. Laughing in the face of swordsmen and tweaking the nose of diving wolves you scramble up rock faces, through water and underground hazards, all the while scooping up crystals which conjure up the game's unique features: shadow ninja spirits, extra energy or emergency flames. It's a frustratingly tough game made worse by periods of frustrating mediocrity: its only redeeming qualities are the weapons and the ninja's kangaroo-like leaping abilities.



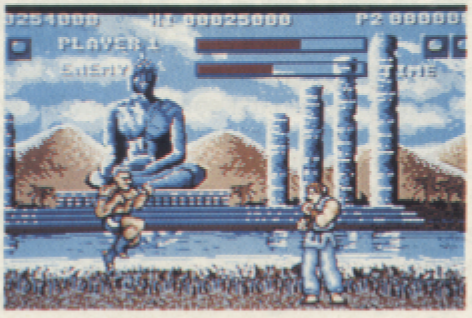
ORIENTAL GAMES

FOR DETAILS of this MicroStyle martial arts masterpiece, read the review on page 70.



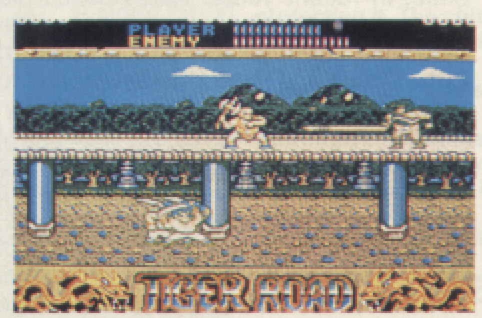
SHINOBI

THE SALES Curve's conversion of Sega's **Shinobi** is a horizontally scrolling mission-based affair for fans of intellectual chop-socky. Its aims are simple: the instructions such as 'pursue the terrorists' are mere covers for making fried chicken out of opponents' brains. The shinobi's standard moves allow him to kick and leap great distances, but he's also blessed with extra weapons from run-of-the-mill shuriken to powerful guns. His best point though, is his ability act as a smart bomb: pressing the space bar shatters our hero into replicas of himself which whizz about the screen destroying everything in sight. The game's other remarkable feature is its bonus screen – a cross between **Operation Wolf** and **Space Invaders** which sees opponents somersaulting down the screen as you attempt to despatch them with shurikens. Otherwise the action has some neat touches such as Spiderman opponents, hefty Bosses, a different tune per level, hazy speech and a time limit. Its bad points are very disappointing though. These include very poor scrolling, some crude graphics, poor collision detection and a difficulty level that's not.



STREET FIGHTER

ANOTHER CapCom coin-op converted to 16-bit courtesy of US Gold, Street Fighter features a character by the name of Ryu who decides he's had enough of fish soup and tea on the floor and decides to take on the world's best street fighters single-handedly. As the fighters change, so do the locations, ranging from some pagoda-like place in Japan to a railway siding somewhere in America. Most of his opponents have weapons no more elaborate than a bunch of fives, but one or two have shuriken, bits of lead piping and even a boxing glove or two. Whoever gains the best of three bouts is deemed the winner – and Ryu can go on to test his reflexes in bonus levels by chopping piles of concrete slabs. Apart from sluggish animation and a redundant two-player option, the game's serious flaw is its difficulty level – it's far too easy. A couple of nifty ankle kicks or flying leaps sees off most opponents, and you don't even need to study the moves properly to win. One for kamikaze pilots and masochists only.



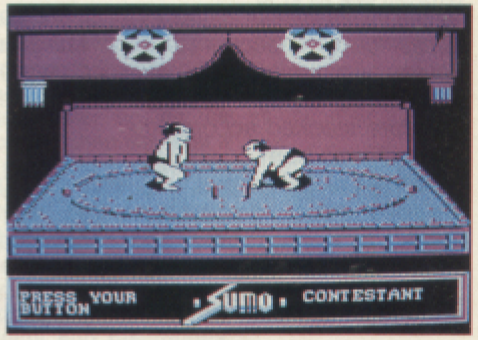
TIGER ROAD

US GOLD'S relationship with CapCom has spawned many a hack and beat 'em up, not least of which is this unusual multi-level caper. It's not a 'pure' beat 'em up in the sense that it doesn't feature a wide variety of moves, relying more on the fast axe-work of its hero and the speed with which he is assaulted by all manner of crazy opponents. The villain of this tale is Ryu Ken Oh, kidnapper of children, razer to the ground of villages and brainwasher of simple peasants. Lee Wong (that's you) leaps to the rescue indoors and out, beating brain dead minions to a pulp, whilst picking up bonus power, weapons and goodies. It's not amazingly faithful to the arcade original – it's more of an interpretation than a pixel-for-pixel conversion – but it's graphically smooth and manages to capture the coin-op spirit. Combat comes thick and fast; but the opponents (apart from the end-of-stage Bosses) are all pretty ineffectual. Don't expect too much.



VIGILANTE

THE PLOT to this US Gold conversion of the Irem coin-op is unremarkable. Boy meets Girl only to lose her to Evil, so Boy takes on Evil in a multi-level scroller to get Girl back. And just to hurry him along, intermission screens show what the enemy is getting up to with your fiance (called, oddly enough, Madonna). Thug after thug is on the warpath so it's a good thing you are a Martial Arts Expert, and can handle things like nunchakus without pricking your fingers. At the end of the first level you discover the game's least friendly opponent: a man whose biceps look like tree trunks, and whose thighs look like the same tree trunks about one hundred years later. Several somersaults, kicks, punches, weapon throws, junk yards and fairgrounds further on you might just manage to catch up with Madonna – but will she be alive or just fit for Kit-e-Kat tins? It's a fair conversion marred by excessive initial difficulty and defensive manoeuvres which prove a tad inaccessible.



WORLD GAMES

ARGUABLY the highlight of Epyx's long history of excellent sports simulations is **World Games**. Of the eight events it contains, one is a version of Sumo Wrestling – which is, in fact, the only such simulation available anywhere. (Interestingly enough, MicroStyle's 8-bit versions of Oriental Games feature Sumo Wrestling as an extra discipline – on 16-bit this discipline is lost in favour of the joystick editor). Sumo is a simple game – the basic objective is for one 400lb lump of lard to topple over another 400lb lump of lard, or to push him out of a very small, sand-covered ring. It's not surprising, then, that Epyx has managed a faithful, humorous representation of the sport. It's a two-player head-to-head battle of the bulge featuring 12 basic moves, including push, pull, grab, slap and trip, and a spectacular overhead throw (Utchari). The quicker you finish the more points you receive. If you haven't slapped any fat lately, take a look.



ARCADES ACTION

BEAT 'EM UPS are a fertile genre for coin-op manufacturers, ever since the success of Data East's **Karate Champ** – one of the first successful implementations of simulated martial arts violence. Innovations have included Street Fighter's punch bag, a host of ever-larger sprites and screens, gimmicky weapons and unusual button controls. However, they all still maintain the simplicity and immediacy of simple moves: it's unlikely that the coin-op market will venture into the complexity of a Budokan or Oriental Games. Of the most recent beat 'em ups, the best are probably **Violence Fight** and **Final Fight**.

BIG SCREEN BEAT 'EM UPS

MARTIAL ARTS movies contain universal patterns of behaviour reflected in all societies: incredible feats of endurance and fighting ability, clashes of strength, epic themes, clear moral boundaries and cardboard characterisation. It's a genre best known for quick-fire violence, rolling heads, dead bodies and good guys always triumphing over bad guys. Pure martial arts have so few injuries because, with the exception of judo and full-contact karate, all techniques are pulled short of their respective targets in practice. Fighting on film is different.

For a while in the early '70s it looked as though Hong Kong was on course to eclipse Hollywood itself as the film capital of the known universe – and it was all down to **Enter The Dragon**, a low budget and thinly disguised rehash of the early James Bond movies.

Despite its obvious flaws – bad acting, wafer-thin plot and slipshod dubbing – the movie was an international smash catapulting martial arts supremo Bruce Lee into the megastar league. Unfortunately for Lee he didn't stick around long enough to enjoy the fanatical hero worship that has been heaped upon him for the past decade or so.

Lee's untimely demise, under circumstances as mysterious as those of fellow 20th Century icons Marilyn Monroe, John F Kennedy and Jim Morrison, may have tempered the immediate teen enthusiasm for all things oriental and violent, but it far from buried it.

Without Lee as the only bankable international star western audiences soon tired of the genre and its appeal to cinema audiences waned. However, despite the ambivalence of the west and Hong Kong studios still churned out martial arts based movies at a bewildering pace picking up massive audiences throughout Asia.

With the advent of the VCR in the early 1980s the genre came in for an immediate revival in Britain and the States. Video stores soon discovered that kung-fu movies, no matter how obscure, were guaranteed a high turnover and were therefore stocked accordingly.

A cult was born.

One of the first names to emerge during this second coming was America's Chuck Norris, a Korean War and respected karate practitioner.

Norris' movie career began with an appearance as Bruce Lee's nemesis in **Way Of The Dragon**, followed a little later with starring roles in cheap and cheerful fodder like **Force Of One**, **Good Guys Wear Black** and **The Octagon**, before appearing in more mainstream movies such as **Missing In Action** and **Invasion USA**.

Back in Hong Kong a new generation of martial arts aficionados were also making their presence felt on the home video market.

With the success of **Police Story** and **Drunken Master** (now a PC Engine game), Jackie Chan displayed much of the humour and physical prowess, if maybe not quite the same charisma, as Lee and is now generally considered as his natural successor.

Other names that may not mean much at the box office but are known amongst the video fraternity include Yuen Biao (**Dreadnaught**), Michiko Nishiwaki (**My Lucky Stars**), Benny Urquidez (**Force: Five**), and Sho Kosugi (**Black Eagle**). Not forgetting Samo Hung (**Dragons Forever**), who starred with Bruce Lee in Enter The Dragon and is renowned for his girth. Nicknamed 'Fatty', he's also co-starred with Jackie Chan in **Sky Hawk** and **Way Of The Fat Dragon**.

Never slow to exploit a cult Hollywood has used elements of martial arts to good effect in recent years. Kurt Russell did battle with warring samurais in the otherwise unremarkable **Big Trouble In Little China** and Patrick Swayze learnt to kick-box for the abysmal **Roadhouse**.

However, if the recent US success of Steven Seagal's **Hard To Kill** is anything to go by it looks as though kung-fu is in for a revival as far as mass audiences go. Seagal burst upon the scene a couple of years back as the eponymous hero of **Nico**, a routine cop thriller lifted above the run of mill by the star's expertise in Aikidoka.

Kung-fu as a mass cinema attraction is back in the limelight in the unlikely form of a low budget spoof movie called **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**, produced by Golden Harvest, a small Hong Kong studio that gave Bruce Lee his first break 20 years ago...

Curtis Hutchinson

SMALL SCREEN SHINDIG

BROADCAST in 42 countries, **Kung Fu** was the most popular martial arts TV series ever made, reaching a Number One rating in the US in 1973. The part was originally offered to Bruce Lee before David Carradine took it – even so, the fighting was authentic, with proper martial artists standing in for the actors. The series' philosophy, however, was more a creation of the scriptwriter's pen than ancient Chinese scripture. Carradine seldom did any fighting that required any expertise – kung-fu instructor Kam Yuen served as his double. Nor (apart from one episode) did he shave off all his hair: most of the time he wore a skullcap for flashback scenes. The only other TV series to feature martial artists regularly was **The Thrillseekers**. But how can anyone forget **Hong Kong Phooey** ("Is it Henry, the mild-mannered janitor? Could be...")?

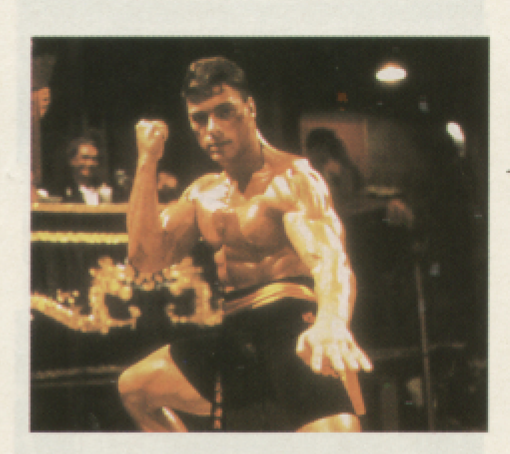


THE FEMININE TOUCH

ALTHOUGH Angela Mao (**Deadly China Doll**) was the seminal female film star, Michelle Khan was the first to make it to the big time. A former Miss Malaysia and ballet dancer forced into acting following a crippling back injury, she only starred in three films: **Police Assassins 1** and **2** and **Twinkle, Twinkle, Lucky Stars** – roles which inspired followers such as Cynthia Khan, Elain Lui, Moon Lee, Joyce Godzenski and Cynthia Rothrock (**Eyes Of The Dragon, China O'Brien**).

AKIRA KUROSAWA

DIRECTING is dominated by Akira Kurosawa (Japan) and Chang Cheh (China). Kurosawa's most recently acclaimed work is **Ran**, but he also directed **Yojimbo**, The Seven Samurai (1954) and **Throne Of Blood**. Chang Cheh forms part of a Chinese triangle which also incorporates actors Ti Lung and David Chiang, in such timeless classics as **Have Sword Will Travel** and **Legend Of The Seven Golden Vampires**. For comic fans, it's interesting to note that Cheh directed Wang Yu in **The One-Armed Swordsman**. The only director to rival this pairing is Japan's Inagaki, who made 26 chop-socky classics in all.



JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME

EUROPEANS looking for martial arts screen heroes have a choice of two. Jean-Claude Van Damme, aka 'The Muscles From Brussels' found his fighting feet in films after Hong Kong Producer Ng See Yuen signed him to play a chop-socky super hero in the low-budget **No Retreat, No Surrender**. A former stunt man on some Chuck Norris shoots, he progressed to **Bloodsport**, a virtual remake of Enter the Dragon. After **Black Eagle** and **Cyborg** he made the widely-acclaimed **Kick Boxer**, yet another reworking of the revenge-drama-cum-secret-tournament plot. Described as a combination of good looks, brawn and high kicks, Van Damme looks set to succeed Chuck Norris at the top of the chop-socky tree. The second, and the only British martial arts actor to achieve fame to date, is Mark Houghton a kung-fu expert from Coventry. Most of his films are for dyed in the dobok martial arts fans only, but he's also starred in **Kickfighter** and **City Cops**. Next up is a co-starring role with Dolph Lundgren in **Universal Soldier**.

TOSHIRO MIFUNE

JAPANESE acting spills over with martial arts stars, and there's none bigger than the ubiquitous Toshiro Mifune. A practitioner of several disciplines (especially kendo), he first rose to stardom in the classic **The Seven Samurai** (which inspired **The Magnificent Seven**). He's best known for roles playing a rough samurai warrior (as he did in **Throne Of Blood**, a feudal Japanese version of **Macbeth**), but has also starred in the West in typical Hollywood films such as **Red Sun** with Charles Bronson. Other Japanese stars include Sho Kosugi who starred in **Enter The Ninja** and its imaginatively-titled sequel, **Revenge Of The Ninja**. A towering karate champion, Kosugi is reputedly the man who made 'ninja' a household word in America.

CHUCK NORRIS

WINNER of eight major world karate titles, writer of karate books and best known for his impressive arsenal of kicking techniques, Chuck Norris is also the biggest name in cinematic martial arts machismo history. He's also more recently switched his attention to rewriting the Vietnam War on film, acting in the Missing In Action trilogy, and kicking heads in **Delta Force** and **Firewalker**. Thanks to him, Pat Johnson, Bob Wall, Richard Norton and Bill Wallace all got launched on their careers. His B-movie equivalent is Joe Lewis, a former army man who took only a year to gain black belt status, who was once offered the part of Buck Rogers, and who starred in such classics as Force: Five (with quart-in-a-pint-pot kick-boxer, Benny Urquidez) and **Death Cage**.

THE KING OF KUNG-FU

NO-ONE knows why Bruce Lee died. At the age of 32, five major films and countless minor roles behind him, with no real history of ill-health, it was the kind of mystery that legends thrive on. From the media's point of view, the inquest couldn't have returned a better verdict: death by misadventure. Speculation ranged from the possible – an allergic reaction to a pain-killer – to the downright bizarre – poisoning at the hands of rival film-makers or the Chinese mafia.

Whatever the cause, the consequences of Bruce Lee's enigmatic death were inevitable – it earned him cult status and ensured that he'd be forever after associated with bringing the fighting techniques of the orient into the homes of the west.

Not that Bruce Lee's fighting style was strictly traditional. His brand of martial arts was definitely hybrid, an amalgam of techniques and ideas that slowly evolved into a unique personal style. It owed as much to his cosmopolitan background and the non kungi-fu influences of his childhood – street fighting, dancing – as to the rules of any particular martial art.

What he didn't achieve on celluloid, Bruce Lee made up for on the streets. By the time he reached 14 he was heavily embroiled in local gang warfare and getting his knuckles bruised on a regular basis. It wasn't an unusual hobby in Hong Kong but for Lee, affectionately nick-named Little Dragon by his sisters, it had one major drawback: he didn't always win – and losing made him mad.

In an effort to maximise his muscle power the Little Dragon tried his fist at various types of kung-fu and finally settled on Wing Chun – a 400 year old Chinese fighting system which he learned from its current master Yip Man. He was talented and wanted to become unbeatable. As if by magic, ham-fisted hoodlum was transformed into street-fighter extraordinaire.

In 1959 Bruce was shipped off to relatives in the west in a last ditch attempt to keep him out of trouble with the cops. After a brief spell working as a busboy in a restaurant in Washington he started teaching kung-fu according to the philosophy he expounded in his one and only book – Chinese Gung Fu: The Philosophical Art Of Self Defense.

The big break didn't come until 1966. He was offered the supporting role of Kato in the TV series **The Green Hornet**. As high-kicking chauffeur and bodyguard to Van Williams, the great Green Hornet himself, he won brief popularity but the series didn't lead to more than a few bit parts. He appeared briefly in James Garner's **Marlowe**, and long enough to expound his philosophy in the **Longstreet** TV series. It left him with enough capital to set up three martial arts kwoons (schools). What he taught in them was an entirely individual brand of kung-fu which he later called Jeet Kune Do – The Way Of The Intercepting Fist.

While Hollywood was slow to bite the kung-fu bait, Hong Kong saw and acclaimed the local re-runs of the Green Hornet. Lee was offered a contract and made his first Chinese action film, **The Big**

Boss.

Along with **Fist Of Fury**, it led to an explosion of kung-fu mania in the west. The number of kwoons mushroomed overnight, obscure martial arts gained avid followers and Lee became kung-fu celebrity Number One. By 1971 he could afford to charge the bargain price of $175 for an hour of teaching – and plenty of celebrities, including the likes of Steve McQueen, flocked to snatch the opportunity. Lee appeared on talk shows, visited tournaments, publicised his art but most of all he made movies. He formed his own production company and in 1973 produced two more films – **Enter The Dragon** and **Way Of The Dragon** – before embarking on what was supposedly his most ambitious project, **Game Of Death**.

Then suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, he died. The Little Dragon left a giant reputation behind him. He'd perfected the techniques of Jeet Kune Do to such a pitch that there weren't many human opponents he could safely compete against. He'd successfully mastered a range of martial arts weapons and at 128lbs he could pack the punch of a heavyweight. Of all the rumours regarding his death, Bruce Lee's closest friends declared that one of them definitely couldn't be true – no way could he have been felled by a mysterious Chinese death touch because nobody could have got close enough.

Kati Hamza

BRUCE ON FILM

THE BIG BOSS (1971)

LEE'S first Chinese action film was actually held up for over a year because of problems with distribution and the censors who couldn't stomach some of the more gory scenes. It deals with the exploits of a new boy at a factory who backs up striking workers with his martial arts skills.

FIST OF FURY (1972)

A LOW-budget chop-socky extravaganza, with a fairly bland plot, Fist Of Fury was so chock-a-block with steamy oriental action that it still managed to catapult the high-kicking hero to fame. The inmates of one kung-fu school poison the teacher at a rival establishment and the adoring pupil, Bruce Lee, sets out on a catalogue of revenge. He's torn between his desire to achieve it and the need to keep the reputation of his school clean – revenge manages to win by a nose every time. Some of the ensuing carnage made its debut in graceful slow motion. It's not to be confused with Fist Of Fury II, a low budget spin-off-cum-rehash made in 1976 which starred Ho Tsung-Tao (subtly nicknamed Bruce Li).

ENTER THE DRAGON (1973)

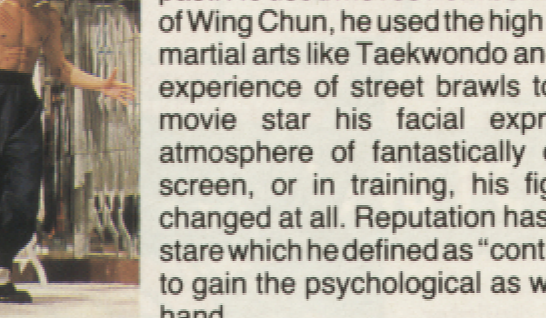
AMONG the most elaborate and spectacular of Lee's films, this was the first and only kung-fu caper to actually feature the great man's voice. Equipped with a heftier budget and a few more American cinematic techniques, it was distinguished by the debut of the nunchukka and the Philippine escrima stick. As for the plot (and nobody really cared about that) it cast Lee as a Chinese James Bond on an assignment to infiltrate a Hong Kong martial arts tournament and bust an opium racket.

WAY OF THE DRAGON (1973)

BRUCE spent some time studying American film-making techniques and Way Of The Dragon was one of the guinea pigs. Written, produced and directed by the kung-fu king, it had a much more ambitious location than traditional Chinese movies (Rome) and even an American co-star – Chuck Norris. It was intended to be the first of a series which cast Lee as Tan Lung, a contract heavy hired by a Chinese restaurateur to relieve him of problems with the local syndicate. The emphasis is on the power of the simple. Tan Lung, the country boy, still manages to win in spite of all the technology at the disposal of the Westerners.

GAME OF DEATH (1979)

BRUCE Lee never finished his last film but enough had been shot to put together a posthumous version. Its premier in Hollywood was marked by the mayor's proclamation of Bruce Lee Day – June 7th. The original plot pitted Lee against some of his oldest pupils – Dan Inosanto, who actually introduced Lee to escrima and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, otherwise famous for his exploits as Los Angeles Laker on the basketball court.



BRUCE LEE THE FIGHTER

LEE'S own fighting techniques were an expression of his past. He used moves from boxing, he used the centre line of Wing Chun, he used the high kicks of northern Chinese martial arts like Taekwondo and he made the most of his experience of street brawls to fight functionally. As a movie star his facial expressions added to the atmosphere of fantastically overdone scenes – off screen, or in training, his fighting expression never changed at all. Reputation has it that he fixed a piercing stare which he defined as "controlled cruelty", an attempt to gain the psychological as well as the physical upper hand.

WING CHUN

BRUCE was the first to reveal the secrets of Wing Chun to the West and his openness got him into trouble. His studies with the current grandmaster were cut short and never resumed. Lee continued on his own and eventually came up with Jeet Kune Do, a partial rejection of more traditionalist ordered styles, including Wing Chun. Ironically enough, he was repeating an episode that had occurred more than four hundred years before. Legend has it that Wing Chun was founded by the woman Ying Wing Chun as a reaction against the more complex and rigidly ordered system of the Shaolin Ng Mui.

In Wing Chun, the emphasis is on aggression and the combination of aggressive and defensive moves. An imaginary centre line is drawn vertically through the standing opponent – all attacks are aimed at this area and all defenses concentrate on protecting it. The chief Wing Chun weapons are butterfly knives (always used in pairs) and the long pole.

On screen, Lee's flamboyant fighting scenes bear little resemblance to the economical movement typical of his first discipline but they do underline its philosophy. Wing Chun's principles of simplicity, economy and spontaneity form the backbone of Jeet Kune Do.

JEET KUNE DO

THE WAY Of The Intercepting Fist was never meant to become a discipline in its own right. It originated as a reaction against any kind of system and was defined by Lee as a concept rather than a technique. Later on, as the name became more popular than the idea it stood for, he actually regretted naming it.

For Bruce Lee, kung-fu was a direct expression of the self. To him, a great master was someone who could turn idea into action with the minimum of energy and no more. "The closer to the way of Kung-Fu, the less wastage of expression there is." Traditionally elaborate systems and disciplines, including Wing Chun, frequently struck him as repetitive, old-fashioned and of no real fighting value. Jeet Kune Do was an attempt to move away from what he called this "organised despair", "lessons in futility" or the "classical mess".

Jeet Kune Do was defined as a means to an end, not an end in itself. It was supposed to be a way of self-discovery, designed to train a fighter to express himself in whatever way seems best. And if that meant using unorthodox methods to get out of a situation, so be it. On one occasion, challenged by a man to demonstrate how he would fight him with a stick, Lee picked it up and bashed him over the head with it.

The Little Dragon defined three stages in the process of acquiring this up-to-the-minute technique: learn, apply, dissolve. Study a discipline, practice it until you can implement it and then allow it to become an automatic part of yourself. Fighting should come naturally.

FIVE HIT FACTS ABOUT BRUCE LEE

* Lee Jun Fan (the name Bruce was suggested by his mother's obstetrician) was born in San Francisco on November 27th, 1940.

* His father was a touring Chinese opera entertainer and Lee's first taste of the entertainment industry came before he was old enough to talk – as a baby stand-in in an American production of Golden Gate Girl.

* By the time he was six he'd been spotted by producers in his home town of Hong Kong and had begun a fairly promising career as a cute, pouting child star. Low budget and, by Hollywood standards, technologically primitive, the Hong Kong films cast him in about 20 different roles – anything from cheeky cherub to troubled teen, though none of them had a heavy connection with the martial arts.

* The Marquis Of Queensberry's rules don't have that much in common with the disciplines of Wing Chun, but this hyperactive bundle of teenagedom managed to excel in both.

* The boxing trophies were presumably displayed in the same cabinet as the dancing ones – Bruce Lee loved to boogie and had a particular penchant for the cha cha. At the tender age of 14 he was declared official Hong Kong Cha Cha champion.

BINARY BRUCE

DESPITE the glut of martial arts simulations on the market, surprisingly few have jumped on the Bruce Lee bandwagon. So far there have been just two.

BRUCE LEE
US Gold

OF THE two available on 16-bit one isn't even a beat 'em up proper. Bruce Lee dates back to those heady days when platform games were all the rage and stickmen sprites against Play School backdrops were hailed as state of the art. A bricky Bruce leaps around a network of platforms, corridors and escalators collecting lanterns, flicking switches and beating up eternally regenerating ninjas and thugs. On 8-bit there's just enough to it to make it playable – unfortunately the PC version runs just a tad too fast for the modern IBM compatible and that makes it all a bit too hard to play, even for nostalgics.

BRUCE LEE LIVES
Software Toolworks

THIS MUCH more recent effort on the other hand comes with everything a decent beat 'em up should have: 16 well-animated moves, good presentation, a wide variety of backdrops and most important of all, highly sophisticated artificial intelligence. This is not the kind of beat 'em up where resorting to the same move over and over again automatically wins a match. Opponents observe your style and react to it, blocking and avoiding your moves. Up to three consecutive movements are pre-programmable, and a handy practice option displays all possible joystick options on screen so there's no need to keep flicking through the manual. The scenario is another bonus. Instead of just graduating through a series of ever beefier opponents, there are separate missions to complete. Each one provides its own set of mix and match drug smugglers – one way to ensure you never know who or what is coming next.

AMERICA TURNS TURTLE

THE TEENAGE Mutant Ninja Turtles started life as a black and white cartoon comic dreamed up by Americans Peter Laird, 36, and Kevin Eastman, 27. Fuelled by stories about 500lb turtles being found in the sewers of New York living off waste food, they were tickled by the idea of slow-moving pokes able to move like lighting. There are four turtles which grow to human size after being glooped with radioactive waste. A mutated rat called Splinter trains them and names them after his favourite painters: Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello and Michelangelo.

> "The Beeb shows Turtle cartoons to five million kids each week under the title Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles. Why? Well, Ninja for kiddiwinks is a no-no."

OK. YOU'RE walking down an unlit street in New York City. It's getting late, it's cold and you're worried about getting home with limbs intact. Up ahead a gang of slimeballs crack knuckles and jeer. The steam from the sewers is like a portent from Hell saying "Go back... your anatomy does not want to be rearranged."

But then you realise you're surrounded. An epidemic of the worst imaginable street bums are all around you laughing and moving in for the kill – yellow teeth and cracked smiles. Your fingers close around the steely cold gun in your overcoat pocket. You don't want to use it but it's your looks or their lookout. Thank God there's four slugs left in the chamber and four geeks primed for pushing up daisies.

Then it happens... your superhero has arrived to save your skin and whisk the trash off to the slammer.

Is it a man?

...of the super-human variety, red cape and black crewcut sparkling in the moonlight?

No!

Is it a sleek bat-like creature with eyes glinting out of a sturdy mask?

No!

In front of you are four giant, green mutant turtles with headbands on, all ready to kick shit out of anyone that moves. And worst of all they're shouting "Cowabunga!"

You raise your piece and squeeze... at least they'll make better soup than the guys in the leather and chains.

Well, what would you do if you actually met the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles? Embrace them and call them your friends? What would you do if they came round to a party? "Erm... Mum... Meet my new friends... Yes, I know they stink of shit but they live in the sewers... Here, let me introduce you... This is Raphael the rebel... This is Michelangelo the prankster... This is Donatello the boffin and here we have Leonardo the leader... You don't mind if we throw some shurikens around the house and play nunchaku do you?" Better get used to having your jackets pressed extra straight, kiddo!

Yes, it's the complete improbability of the Turtles success story which is so mind-boggling. A cyborg cop with blazing guns – fine. A Kryptonite-fearing hack who turns into an all-powerful being. Hey, now we're talking. I can almost take a man dressed as a bat twisted by the night. But heroes-in-a-half-shell who eat pizza in the sewers and do flying death kicks while shouting surfer-lingo like "Bodacious" and "Gnarly"? Has America flipped out of its shell for real?

The answer is yes. The feature film took a cool $100 million in its first four weeks. The kids vids chart has five Turtles' titles in the Top Seven, one of which has been charting for – count 'em – 80 weeks! It's no better than pop charts infested with Beatles. One of the leading video stores in the States – Erol's Video – has warned its shop managers that the Turtles may even be too popular for some stores to cope with. In a directive from HQ it pinpoints some steps to avoid having a 'disaster' in-store... "Figure on more staff... you need more assistance for all the little people." Scary monsters! US kids have already shelled out $50 million on 300 various Turtles toys and accessories.



To top it all a New Jersey merchandising company is ready to let rip with Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle dinnerware and health and fitness videos. You can just imagine it... a smart business executive heading for a day on Wall Street having just worked out with a mutant turtle. Heavy duty. Better watch that Dow Jones Index...

What is coming round the corner is anyone's guess. A re-emergence (God forbid) of the turtle-neck pullover?

The United Kingdom is already bracing itself to be shell-shocked. But the main debating point, however, is what they're going to be called. The Beeb shows Turtle cartoons to five million kids each week under the title Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles. Why? Well, Ninja for kiddiwinks is a no-no. Virgin, which owns the film and video rights, is currently debating the name change – if any. Chances are it will keep the Ninja. As for the Ninja references within the film, the censor is less heavy-handed these days with martial arts equipment, especially so since The Thundercats who had a penchant for throwing flying stars.

The movie is supposed to be great fun as it happens. But it IS sadly ironic that while the big screen shows this Renaissance of turtles from human excreta (all bearing Renaissance-painter's names), in oceans around the globe these turtles' giant relatives are on the verge of extinction thanks to our pollution.

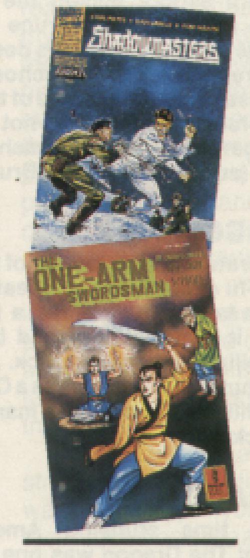
But that's showbusiness... Cowabunga!

Peter Dean

PAPER TIGERS

MARTIAL ARTS comics are published as much in America as in the Orient, though few of them ever make the journey into High Street shops here – those that do appear are translated from Hong Kong Chinese. Inevitably their subject-matter concentrates on the same issues found in the cinema: moral boundaries, plenty of kicking, a few token ninjas and the odd bit of gore.

HONG KONG-based Jademan produce the best of the 'traditional' oriental martial arts comics. Packed with typically doe-eyed heroes whose expressions barely ever change, they feature detailed, colourful and interesting stories. The fight sequences in particular are imaginatively drawn, often using multiple images and hardly ever resorting to blood: text is never oppressive and visual impact is always strong. The comic stable also includes the excellent Drunken Fist, Oriental Heroes, The Force Of Buddha's Palm **and** The Blood Sword.



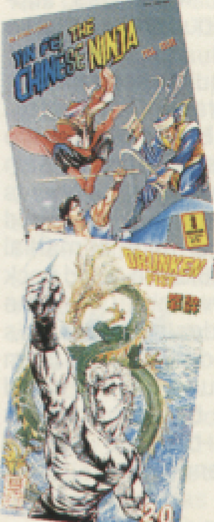
EASTMAN and Laird's Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles **is half the price of the other comics, and definitely aimed at a younger audience. It stars the quartet of pizza-loving aquatic reptiles as they waddle their cute way through large-frame,** Goonies**-style comedy adventures. Based on the TV series it's the only British (Fleetway) publication in this selection. A more palatable alternative details the adventures of** Usagi Yojimbo, **the ronin rabbit, whose exploits have already been converted onto 8-bit by Firebird.**

PERHAPS better known for his work on Batman: Year One **and** Batman: The Dark Knight Returns, **Frank Miller has also had a stab at producing a couple of comics around a martial arts theme.** Ronin, **published by DC Comics (issues available from 1983), interweaves themes of futuristic technology with contemporary sociology in a world poised on the brink of war. An 800 year-old Samurai warrior and a shape-changing demon, Agat, were trapped in a magic sword until a computer of the future freed them. The warrior takes possession of a limbless prosthetic technician, Billy. The demon (Agat) is also on the look-out for flesh to possess and settles into the head of an organisation dedicated to peace. Even with plenty of bio-technology lurking about, the beat 'em up theme is strong, with imaginative fight scenes, claustrophobic artwork and a strong enigmatic streak.**



MARVEL COMICS has a long history of martial arts work whose quality varies as much as its style. Master Of Kung Fu **rigidly adheres to a serialised 'Tune In Next Month' format rather than a series of one-off tales. Its worst aspects are heavily Americanised text, dozens of annoying advertisements and bogus philosophy, but there's enough punching to satisfy the most petulant pugilist. The recent four-part** Shadowmasters **(which details the origins of the ninjas found in the pages of** The Punisher**) is much more artistically accomplished: its more modern approach packs fight scenes in with adult text, some oriental mysticism nonsense and a brilliant stereotypically evil Japanese megalomaniac.**

DR LEUNG is another Hong Kong-based comic producer with a nice sideline in flogging Chinese art, stone seals, videos, posters and books. The comic content revolves around four main contenders: Yin Fei The Chinese Ninja, The One-Arm Swordsman, 4-D Monkey **and** The Invincible Four Of Kung-Fu & Ninja. **All are strong on dramatic impact (despite simplistic plot lines) and feature a Dr Kung-fu mailbox which addresses itself seriously to martial arts issues.**

AN EIGHT-issue limited series, Elektra Assassin **was also written by Miller, but drawn by the distinctive Bill Sienkiewicz. The comic's complex plot is effectively conveyed by a disjointed narrative style which holds its secret right until the very end. The beat 'em up element is conveyed through the title character, a sword-wielding ninja with designs on mind control and world domination. But its storyline also incorporates American Presidents, a world (again) on the brink of nuclear war, demons and dwarves and a combination of futuristic technology and traditional good versus evil conflicts.**

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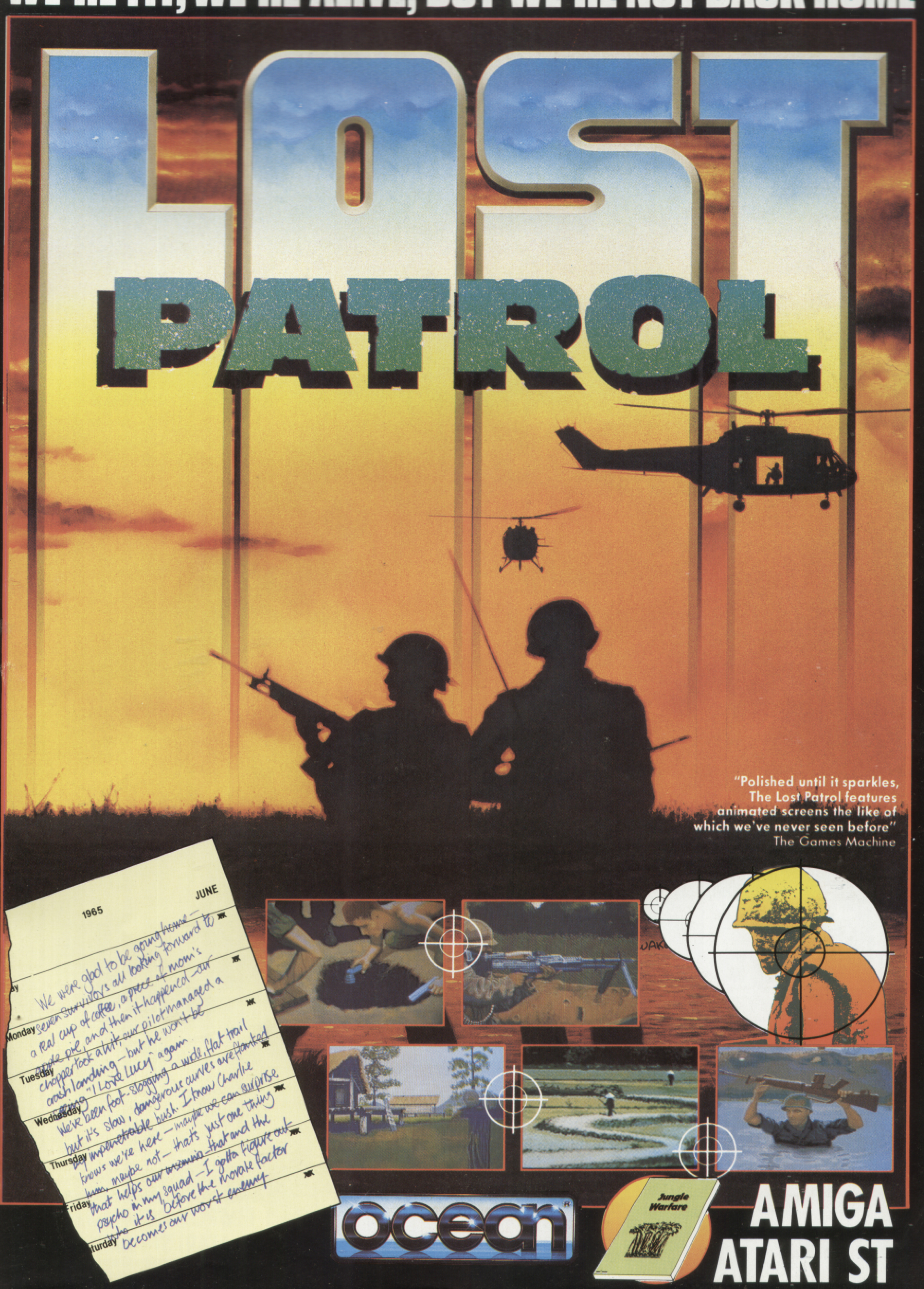
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1965
JUNE
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
We were glad to be going home — seven survivors all looking forward to a real cup of coffee, a piece of mom's apple pie, and then it happened — our chopper took a hit, our pilot managed a crash landing — but he won't be singing "I Love Lucy" again
We've been foot-slogging a wide, flat trail but it's slow, dangerous curves are flanked by impenetrable bush. I know Charlie knows we're here — maybe we can surprise him, maybe not — that's just one thing that helps our that and the psycho in my squad — I gotta figure out who it is before the morale factor becomes our worst enemy
ocean
Jungle Warfare
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ATARI ST